

ALPHEUS W. WILSON

A Prince in Israel



A. W. Wilson

ALPHEUS W. WILSON

A PRINCE IN ISRAEL

By CARLTON DANNER HARRIS

Editor of

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DEDICATION.

To the memory of my father,
Rev. David Harris, who was an
itinerant preacher in the Balti-
more Conference from 1860 to
1868, the latchet of whose shoes
his son is not worthy to unloose.

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FOREWORD.

This volume is the outgrowth of an idea of Dr. W. F. McMurry, Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Church Extension. Dr. McMurry suggested that the author expand his article entitled, "The Late Alpheus W. Wilson," which appeared in the April number of the Methodist Review, to be published in connection with the Bishop's Lectures on the Atonement, for use of the Board of Church Extension. The work under the kindly encouragement of the Secretary has grown to its present dimensions. It is not, however, designed by any means, to take the place of a larger and critical life of Alpheus W. Wilson covering more fully his work as bishop, which treatment in this volume is necessarily meager because of the lack of time and opportunity to secure the proper data. It should rather contribute to a larger work that may appear later from an abler pen, for it has gathered and put in permanent form important information that will likely be of service to the future biographer. The aim of the author has been to make this a personal rather than an official life of the Bishop that its pages may reflect his personality and character. In conformity to this aim many letters and other products of the brain of the Bishop have been used.

The author has done the best he could in the preparation of the book in the limited time allotted him, and it is sent forth with the prayer that the life of the great Bishop may be helpful to many other lives.

Grateful acknowledgments are hereby expressed to all who have aided in the making of the book, especially to the committee of supervision, and to Dr. F. J. Prettyman and Mr. C. M. Armstrong for valuable materials and helpful suggestions, and to Miss Nina Wilson without whose sympathy and co-operation this volume would not have been possible.

Baltimore, December, 1917.

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

BISHOP WARREN A. CANDLER.

The best gift of God to any church, or nation, is a great and good man.

In the gift of Moses to enslaved Israel was bound up deliverance from bondage, the Mosaic law, and the Pentateuch.

In Paul God bestowed on the Church of the first century the missions to the Gentiles, the world-wide propagation of the Gospel, and two thirds of the books of the New Testament.

When Alpheus Waters Wilson was given to Methodism the church received an apostolic Christian, a great administrator, a wise counselor, and a Pauline preacher.

In the days of his strength he was considered by many the greatest preacher in America, if not in the world. In this estimate of him the writer of this introduction deliberately concurs, after having heard most of the great preachers of the world who have lived during the last forty years.

Bishop Wilson was a great preacher because he was a great believer. The Psalmist said "I believed, therefore have I spoken" (Psalms cxvi: 13), and St. Paul quoting the utterance of the Hebrew singer, says, "We also believe, and therefore speak." (2 Corinthians iv: 13.) "Having the same spirit of faith," Bishop Wilson believed, and therefore preached with power. His spiritual insight into the meaning of the oracles of God was deep and his belief in the Gospel of Christ was confident.

Hence he spoke with authority, and not with the hesitating manner and qualified utterance of an academic scribe.

For the writings of St. John and St. Paul he had special fondness, and his grasp of the Pauline Epistles was unequaled by any man of his day. In the epistles to the Romans, the Colossians, and the Ephesians he saw fully set forth the whole scheme of redemption for the lost race of man, and the rapturous vision enthralled his mind and heart.

Subjects less important never engaged his attention in the pulpit. For that type of preaching which finds its themes in current topics he had no respect. Using a portion of Scripture as a mere motto, or sermon caption, he regarded as handling the word of God deceitfully. He did not preach to entertain, but to edify and save. He was not, therefore, what some would call "a popular preacher." For that role he was far too serious and earnest and sincere. He used few illustrations outside the Scriptures, and repeated no pathetic stories to excite the emotions of those to whom he preached. Nevertheless he mightily moved vast audiences as he proclaimed the Gospel "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." The supernatural in his preaching eclipsed the natural. The words with which St. Luke describes Apollos fitly describes Bishop Wilson: "An eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures." (Acts xviii: 24.)

He searched the Scriptures with the most studious care. His knowledge of the New Testament in Greek was as minute as his acquaintance with the King James Version, although he made no show of scholarship and no claim of critical learning. He studied the Word of God that he might know the mind of the Spirit, not that he might win the admiration of men.

In view of his habit of unwearying study of the Scriptures, it might be supposed that he was not concerned to

read other books; but such was not the case. He was a rapid, as well as a careful, reader, and he seemed to have read everything worth reading. He was often in my home during the later years of his life, and the extent of his knowledge of books amazed me. I tried to find for him books he had never read, but seldom was I successful in the effort. On one occasion I thought I had found one he had not seen, or even heard of. It was a book given me in London by Charles Candler, and written by his brother, Edmund Candler, a missionary of the English Church in India. The author of the book had gone with the British Expedition under Younghusband to Thibet, and from the experiences and explorations of that trip wrote a most fascinating narrative entitled "The Unveiling of Lhasa." It was this volume which I had laid away for Bishop Wilson, believing I had at last found something which he had not read. On his next visit to our home, as we were sitting in the library, I said "I have found something now which you never saw." "What is it?" he asked. I answered "It is 'The Unveiling of Lhasa' by Edmund Candler, a British kinsman of mine." With a smile, he said "I found it at Bombay when it was first published, and read it on my way home." Then he proceeded to tell me more about Edmund Candler and the expedition to Thibet than the book revealed and far more than I had ever known. His was the fullest mind with which I ever came in contact. He was familiar with philosophy, history, science, and even much light literature. But with him all knowledge was subordinate to the knowledge of God. During a long life he drew "all his cares and studies that way."

Profound religious convictions, Scriptural principles, and apostolic precedents recorded in the New Testament permeated and controlled his great work as an administrator of the work of the Church, whether he was engaged in the pastoral office, the Secretaryship of the Board of

Missions, or the episcopacy. It was chiefly this element in his life which made him so great in the exercise of administrative functions. While he had a mind of statesmanlike mould, and possessed judicial qualities of a high order, it is not to these alone, or chiefly, we must look to find the secret of his success as an executive officer of the Church; he fashioned his methods of administration according to the "pattern shown him on the Mount."

It was by the apostolic character of his appeals as Missionary Secretary he aroused the conscience of the whole Church while he was engaged in that work. His addresses were not concerned with detailing the customs and describing costumes of the heathen world "as the manner of some is." He laid upon the hearts of men the missionary obligation as it arises from their relation to Christ and our Lord's work of redemption for a ruined world. He rested the case on eternal things, and caused those who heard him to feel that the refusal to give the Gospel to the nations who have it not is treason to Christ and inhumanity to mankind. With such deep truths he broke up the fallow ground of the Church, and the harvest which has followed is due more to his labors than to any other man. The missionary cause was dear to his heart because the salvation of the world is dear to the heart of Christ; and by his masterful presentations of it he made it dear to others who otherwise might have been indifferent to it. No American Church has ever had a greater Secretary of Foreign Missions.

From his work as Missionary Secretary he was called to the office of a bishop, and as a general superintendent of the Church he manifested the same apostolic zeal and employed the same apostolic methods. What a bishop he was! What skill he displayed in assigning the preachers of the Conferences to their fields of labor! With what wisdom did he counsel the men on their admittance into "full connection" as itinerant preachers! With what

power did he preach before the Annual and General Conferences! Shall we ever see his like again?

In the meetings of the Bishops his services were invaluable. When he was present his colleagues felt more safe in their conclusions, and when he was absent there was none to take his place. If the question of his superannuation had been submitted to the bishops at the General Conference of 1914, when he was retired, they would have voted unanimously to retain him "on the effective list," and after his superannuation they still deferred to his judgment and relied on his wise counsels. He was always a man of great heart, but in his latter years he became increasingly tender and affectionate, especially towards his colleagues in the episcopal office. When he died he was the best beloved man among them, and deserved to be.

No multiplication of words can set forth adequately the varied excellencies and remarkable ability of this extraordinary man. In goodness he was great and in greatness he was good.

This biography is an attempt to tell in outline the story of his wonderful life. It is something more than interesting. It is inspiring. It is the record of a life protracted through more than fourscore years glorified by apostolic faith and abounding in apostolic labors. It cannot fail to bless those who read it.

After Elisha, the prophet, had been long dead, when one who was buried in his sepulchre was let down and touched the prophets bones, he "revived and stood up on his feet." (2 Kings xiii:20). In like manner this account of our great prophet's career must surely quicken into new life our faith and zeal.

CHAPTER I.

ANCESTRY.

Alpheus Waters Wilson, the son of Rev. Norval and Cornelia Howland Wilson, was born in Baltimore, February 5, 1834.

His ancestors on his father's side were Scotch-Irish, stanch Presbyterians who clung to the doctrines of Calvinism with a tenacity characteristic of that sturdy people. His grandfather was Thomas Wilson, of Morgantown, West Virginia, then a part of Virginia, a lawyer of acknowledged ability, who not only met the demands of a large practice, but served his state in the Legislature and in Congress with distinction and honor.

To Thomas and his wife Mary were born six sons and three daughters. One of the sons, Edgar, became a resident of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was elected from that state to the United States Senate. Hon. Edgar Wilson had a son who became a member of Congress, showing that political life was not without a fascination for the Wilson family.

Religion had a chief place in the lives of those of the Wilson lineage, as is evident from their history. A son of the home, Norval, became an influential minister. A daughter, Louisa, married Rev. Robert Lowrie, a missionary to India. Though she died shortly after reaching that land, she has the honor of having been recognized by her denomination as the first missionary of the Presbyterian Church to the women of India. Many other facts recorded in

this volume will show how strongly entrenched were the principles of religion in the nature of the Wilsons.

Thomas Wilson was the owner of more than a quarter of a million acres of unimproved land granted to him by patent 1775-6 in Virginia and that part of the state which afterwards became West Virginia. These tracts were in seven groups covering some of the most valuable timber and mineral land in those states, as will be seen from their locations which are as follows:

Group 1. 41,000 acres in Bath County, Virginia, now partly in other counties.

Group 2. 30,000 acres in Bath County, now mostly in Alleghany County.

Group 3. 44,000 acres in Bath County, now in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, on the Greenbrier River.

Group 4. 35,000 acres in Bath County, now in Pocahontas County on the Allegheny mountains.

Group 5. 4,000 acres in Randolph County, West Virginia, now in Upshur County, West Virginia.

Group 6. 57,000 acres in Wythe County, Virginia, now in McDowell County, West Virginia, but from 1798 to 1858 in Tazewell County, Virginia.

Group 7. 60,000 acres in Randolph County on Rich Mountain.

The subdivision of old counties, too large for development, for the formation of new counties and the establishment of the state of West Virginia naturally affected the names of the geographical boundaries of these tracts.

It seems that Thomas Wilson, a gentleman of means, culture and learning, dividing his time be-

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tween his profession and politics, gave but scant attention to his vast tracts which were not regarded at that time to be of special value, for in 1816 four of the groups were forfeited to the state for non-payment of taxes, and ten years previous to that time groups 3 and 4 had been sold by the United States Marshal in the name of Thomas Wilson for non-payment by him of a direct tax imposed by an act of Congress. Other groups slipped through his hands. It is probable that he did not regard them worth the trouble and expense involved in their retention.

His children must have shared the opinion of their father; at any rate they slept upon their rights for years, for much of this land could have been redeemed by a proper settlement with the state. If these property interests had been properly looked after and safeguarded, they would have yielded to their possessors enormous wealth. Thus Bishop Wilson escaped having been born rich. Whether the riches of his great life would have been given to the church if he had been born to large wealth with affluent surroundings no one can say. Circumstances attendant upon wealth do not usually turn the soul toward God. There may have been a providence in all this. Bishop Wilson's life has been worth immeasurably more to the cause of God and the largest welfare of His creatures than incalculable material wealth even wisely used. God places the highest value upon Spirit-filled personality.

Bishop Wilson sometimes spoke of his rights in those Virginia and West Virginia lands, but they gave him little concern. Eighteen or twenty years ago at the request of his sister, he gave a relative the

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power of attorney to take such steps as might be deemed necessary to recover as much of the land as could be reclaimed under law. But because of the heavy expense of litigation and other difficulties, but little has been done. Indeed, so far as is known, the Bishop did nothing to realize on the 3,000 acres of unimproved land in Calhoun County, West Virginia, left him, with Henry's Commentaries and Doddridge's Paraphrases, by his father's will. He was too much interested in the deep things of God to allow his affections to be centered even temporarily on the things of time and sense. He may have laid himself open to the charge of improvidence, but his life moved on a level far removed from material values.

Thomas Wilson and his wife sleep in a cemetery at Morgantown, West Virginia. Their tombstones are disintegrating and will not be likely to stand many more years the ravages of time. One stone bears the inscription.

"Sacred to the memory of Thos. Wilson, Esq., who departed this life Jan. 24, 1820, aged 60 yrs. 4 mos. and 15 days.

"His was a life active, useful and regulated by a uniform principle of integrity.

"Withal an humble reliance in the sacrifice of Christ, he was prepared to———— leaving behind————endeared to recollections of mourning friends.

"Being dead, he yet speaketh."

(The dashes indicate illegible words.)

On the other stone are these lines:

"Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Mary Wilson, consort of Thomas Wilson, who departed this

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life April 22, A. D. 1817, aged 40 yrs. 2 mos. 8 days.

"She lived amiable, affectionate and universally esteemed; she died regretted by others, yet herself resigned and at peace with God.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers."

Thomas Wilson's son Norval, the Bishop's father, was the first Methodist of the Wilson line. He was born in 1802, and was converted at a camp meeting in 1819. In independence, courage, and reverence for the Word of God, he was a worthy son of noble sires. For a time he studied law with a partially formed purpose to follow the profession of his father. But God's Spirit unmistakably indicated his call to the ministry. This brief record in his diary reveals the inner workings of his heart at that critical period, and his fixed desire to do God's will:

Jan. 9th, 1821. With the new year events have transpired to me of the utmost consequence. Having been much exercised about working in the Lord's vineyard, I yet saw no way for me to proceed. I therefore judged it best to resign myself into the hand of the Lord, being assured that if He designed I should preach, He would clear my way. Accordingly I received a long letter from Daniel Hitt, the presiding elder of the Monongahela District, on the 27th of December, 1820, proving conclusively that it was my duty to engage immediately in the work of the ministry.* I gave it to my father, asking him for his opinion. At first he made objections from my youth, but eventually

*An anachronism appears here. The entry in the diary was made January 9, 1821, nearly a year after the death of his father according to a typewritten copy of the inscription on the tombstone, which was placed in the author's hands, with other material for this volume. It is possible that the transcriber did not correctly decipher the date on the partially decayed stone.

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remarked that if I conceived it to be my duty, he would not object. About the first of March I shall go to Baltimore to receive an appointment.

His first sermon was from the text, "Prepare to meet thy God." This Scripture was the keynote of his life and labors. His chief care was to be ready to meet his Lord, and never did his voice falter in warning men of the danger of being unprepared. He was ordained a Deacon by Bishop George, April 20, 1823; and an Elder by Bishop Soule, April 10, 1825. He became one of the ablest and most influential ministers of the Baltimore Conference, and was a potent force in molding the character of Methodism in Baltimore. He was appointed a presiding elder at twenty-six, and at the same age was elected a delegate to the General Conference. It is believed that the Baltimore Conference can furnish no parallel in her history in conferring such a double honor on so young a preacher.

He was a commanding figure in the Baltimore Conference of 1861, and wrote the resolutions adopted by that body severing its relations with the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and disclaiming its authority. He was President of the Conference held in Bridgewater, Va., in 1864, and of the memorable Conference held in Alexandria, Va., in 1866, when the "Old Baltimore" became a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. At this session he was elected a delegate to the General Conference of the Church with which his Conference had become identified.

He was a member of the General Conference at Pittsburgh 1828; Philadelphia 1832; Cincinnati 1836;

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Baltimore 1840; Pittsburgh 1848; Boston 1852; Indianapolis 1856; Buffalo 1860; New Orleans 1866.

He was a strong Scriptural preacher, rightly dividing the Word of truth. He never hesitated to expose iniquity and to call things by their proper names. When Presiding Elder of the Potomac District, he preached a sermon that went to the hearts and consciences of the people. The preacher who sat in the pulpit confessed that he had never felt so mean in his life.

At the conclusion of the services, he said, "Bro. Wilson, I am much obliged to you for preaching that sermon."

The reply came as a rifle shot, "Yes, many men are obliged to others for doing what they are afraid to do themselves."

He preached a sermon at a camp meeting in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1851, which was overwhelming in its effect. His text was John XV:26 and his subject, "The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit: His Mission, and His Office, and Operations." The first words were, "On the doctrine of the Holy Ghost depends the existence of the Church—the salvation and fruit of its members." Near the close he exclaimed, "What sublimity there is in the doctrine of the moral regeneration of the world by this potent energy. How we should felicitate ourselves on the visitation and influence of such an agent." A minister writing of the scene produced by this sermon said, "But who can fill the interval between the first sentence and the conclusion with a fit description? The Holy Ghost attested the truth of the doctrine; preachers and people wept and

shouted. The influence was not limited to those who were near the speaker—the entire ‘circle’ was baptized from above—perhaps for once it may be confessed, the people were *immersed* in the Holy Ghost.”

Bishop Keener said of his preaching:

“He was blessed with the ability to weigh words to an uncommon degree; but nothing in his manner gave intimation of the process; for he spake with much ease, and never wanted the exact word, no, not for an instant. It fell into place as coins from the mint. His regular movement of speech was not disturbed by warmth of sentiment, but in the most impassioned moment of his discourse there was a rhythmic march that gave unity to the whole, or wielded it with unrelenting force. His rate of speed never surpassed his thought, and in this he was not unlike another great pulpit orator of the same city or period—the Rev. Dr. Stockton.

“His strength lay in a sound, unambiguous treatment of his theme, holding to the middle current of evangelical exegesis. He vitalized or reproduced the original power of those formulas of death or life which hold eternity in their syllables. There were in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament all the words of argument, truth, or illustration that he needed, and he rarely went outside the Bible for matter. The unction of the Holy One was his afflatus, and there remained in his audience no room for criticism. His perorations were an abandon of spiritual or mental power in fullest sympathy with the truth, or with those to whom he delivered it, subdued by the habitual reverence of his soul for his Lord and Master. They seemed to me irresistible.”

At the close of the “War Between the States” a new responsibility was thrust upon him. The Constitutional Convention was about to assemble in Richmond. Nearly all of the people who were qualified to represent the counties were ineligible by

reason of participation in the war. Pressure was brought to bear upon Norval Wilson though a minister to serve as a member of that convention. He consented to do so in the event of his election and then used the opportunity to admonish the gentlemen, who bore him the message, of their duties to God.

He was elected and his position and service as a member of that convention are related in the language of an honored associate.

“Rev. Norval Wilson served as the member from Frederick County, in the State Convention convened in 1867, at Richmond, under the Act of Congress, for the purpose of framing a Constitution for the State of Virginia, in conformity with the reconstructive acts. Although advanced in years, and not in firm health, he devoted himself with laborious energy to his representative duties, and exhibited his accustomed clearness and strength of intellect in their discharge. His sound judgment, steady courage, and cheerful spirit, made him a valuable counsellor to the feeble minority of conservatives which sat in that famous conclave. Recognizing fully the sad wreck made by the war, of the true principles of Constitutional Government, he labored zealously to restore the civil system of Virginia upon the best attainable foundation, in view of the fanatical and hostile elements which encompassed the situation. It became the policy of the conservative members to delay the action of the convention, until the thorough organization of the conservative party could be secured and effected throughout the State. Mr. Wilson, who had been placed on the most important committee of the convention, rendered valuable service to this policy of delay, and displayed remarkable ingenuity and mental resource in detaining the majority of the committee from reporting the obnoxious plans to the convention. The wit, humor, skill and consummate knowledge of human nature which he displayed in conducting

this programme, were much enjoyed by his conservative colleagues."

The secret of the fruitful life of Norval Wilson was perhaps rooted in his high order of mental gifts, his philosophic temperament and his complete consecration. What he accomplished was not by the easy efforts of genius but was by disciplined industry.

He not only prosecuted the study of theology both from convictions of duty and a love of that divine science, but in the arduous work of the itineracy found time to explore other fields. He was a diligent student of history, civil and ecclesiastical, law, science, philosophy and other studies necessary for broad and deep culture. During the first twenty years of his ministry he read the Old Testament through fourteen times and the New Testament twenty-five times in addition to having read 347 other volumes. In the meantime he had preached 2,858 sermons and had traveled nearly 40,000 miles and every mile of travel meant something in those days. He expected to succeed by inspiration, but he expected the inspiration of the Holy Ghost only when he had furnished his mind by reading and had methodized his thoughts by study and prayer.

His philosophic temperament enabled him to take rational and what seemed at times stoical views of life. But his apparent stoicism was a fruit of his faith. He had an overwhelming sense that God was in everything and over all. Therefore he bore uncomplainingly any sorrow. Nothing was more sure to him than that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. It was this knowledge born



1. ALPHEUS W. WILSON (1850)
2. REV. ALPHEUS W. WILSON (1853)
3. REV. ALPHEUS W. WILSON (1854)
4. REV. ALPHEUS W. WILSON (1855)

of faith that kept him calm in the midst of all life's activities; in the council room he maintained his poise and was hopeful even if such dispositions were not made of men as he preferred. He believed that God could make the weak things confound the mighty and could bring the best results from seemingly inadequate causes, or inauspicious beginnings. It was this that saved him from elation when conditions were such as to excite hope, and likewise saved him from despondency when all things seemed to unite against the cause which was the object of his highest love.

But perhaps nothing will better reveal his inner life and the hidden source of his power, than a much-worn paper found after his decease in which was recorded his formal consecration and his reconsecrations to God.

"O very merciful and gracious Father, from Whom I have received my being and my blessings, I have been unbelieving and refractory. Though many years ago I received forgiveness of sins as an act of Thy grace, and though I have often felt it a duty to make a solemn and entire dedication of myself to Thee, yet has my wayward heart hesitated and refused. I repent before Thee, and though weak and trembling, I now propose, invoking the aid of Thy grace to assist, to enter upon an act of self consecration, (which I now do,) and I beseech Thee, in consideration of my great Daysman, accept the offering. Here then I present to Thee my soul, embracing my intelligence and my passions; my body, including the exercise of its members and its appetites; my heart, with its varied emotions; my time, my substance, my all, purposing to restrain my passions; to refrain from every word, work, thought, being incompatible with . . . as a consecrated child of God. I purpose henceforth to be solely intent on Thy glory, and subject to Thy will, and to

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lead a life of faith in the *Son of God Who loved me, and gave Himself for me*. Graciously accept my person, and powerfully maintain me in this holy and earnest consecration, through Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Now unto the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be glory forever.

Winchester, Va., July 16, 1846.

NORVAL WILSON.

"I herewith append my faith that God . . . of promise *does*, does accept the offering, and deigns that I am now and altogether His, having my life in God. Praise God for His sovereign, unsearchable grace.

N. WILSON.

"The above act of consecration renewed with hearty gratitude to God, April 29, 1850.

Alexandria, Va.

N. WILSON.

"With devout thanksgiving and prayer, I *again consecrate myself* to God. Amen.

Ingleside, Feb. 8, 1854.

N. WILSON."

His biographer gives a pen picture of his distinguishing characteristics, which will be recognized by the older members of the Baltimore Conference and others who knew him. "His tall, slender, slightly stooping figure; his thin and furrowed face; his strongly marked features; his fine eyes—clear, restful, penetrating, the mirror of an honest soul; his tremulous gait; his rich, sonorous voice, calm in common discourse, quivering with intensity of conviction as he preached the Gospel, and at times penetrating to the very soul, as he manifested the exceeding sinfulness of sin, fitly uttering that Word which 'pierces to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart'" are the graphic touches of this accurate portrait.

Those who had but a slight acquaintance with Norval Wilson thought that he lived in an atmosphere of severity and even sternness. But as has well been said, "John Baptist was probably not more severe in aspect; John, the beloved, not more gentle in fact."

He took the superannuated relation in 1860, but never ceased to do what work he could to the time of his death. His health, never strong, failed in 1860, and according to Dr. Armstrong, in his history of the "Old Baltimore Conference," "he retired from the active work and chose Winchester, Virginia, as his home, where for sixteen years he never ceased itinerating among the churches, as vacancies gave opportunity for Presbyterian, Lutheran and Reformed congregations to invite him temporarily to occupy their pulpits."

His long and useful life came to an end on August 9, 1876, and he was buried in Mt. Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, by the side of his wife, who was Miss Cornelia L. Howland and who, after a happy union of forty-seven years, had preceded him to the heavenly world.

Her son Alpheus paid this tribute to her a few years after he had left the family roof tree. He said that there never had been a meeker, purer spirit than that of his mother's, and added: "If I had inherited her disposition and her piety, I would willingly abandon all the talent and all the external possessions of the family to the others."

Considerable space has been given to the ancestry of Bishop Wilson that heredity may be accorded the credit to which it is entitled for the life of this re-

markable man. It will be observed that the mental habits, the moral convictions, and the heroic spirit of Norval Wilson were strikingly reproduced in his distinguished son.

On his mother's side the Bishop was of Quaker extraction. Her father was Daniel Howland, of the Howland family of New Bedford. Daniel Howland was a sea captain, and about the beginning of the nineteenth century moved to Baltimore and became master of one of the famous Baltimore clippers which was destroyed by the French. He was one of Baltimore's gallant defenders in the early days.

Captain Howland was probably buried in the old South Cemetery, Baltimore, from which the bodies were removed a half century or more ago to some place which is not identified by the mortuary records of the city. His wife is buried in Governor Holliday's lot in Winchester, Virginia.

CHAPTER II.

EARLIER YEARS.

Little is known respecting the boyhood of Bishop Wilson beyond hints which fell from his own lips, as all his contemporaries have gone, and there are now no sources of information available.

We know, however, that he was reared in the pious and wholesome atmosphere of a Methodist parsonage, than which, for the moulding of character according to divine standards, and the furnishing of the mind and heart for the largest usefulness for time and eternity, there is no superior training school on earth.

When his father was stationed in Baltimore, Mr. George W. Corner was his Sunday School teacher. In later life he often remarked there was never a more saintly man, nor one who had the faculty of making his boys take the Scriptures into their minds to a greater degree of thoroughness.

His life is another refutation of the age-old canard that the lives of ministers' children are a practical denial of the efficacy of parsonage training, and that generally they do not proportionately measure up to the lives of others in responding to life's great responsibilities.

Occasionally a minister's child does not reflect credit upon its rearing and opportunities, but this is the exception and not the rule. As a matter of fact it has been said that the proportion of ministers' children who have distinguished themselves by large

achievements is fifty times greater than those of men of other callings. Twenty out of fifty-one names in the National Hall of Fame are those of ministers' sons. Roger Williams, Jonathan Edwards, William Ellery Channing, Emerson, Holmes, Henry Clay, Agassiz, Bancroft, Beecher, Stowe, Lowell, Philips Brooks are among the number. Of our twenty-five presidents, four were ministers' sons—Buchanan, Arthur, Cleveland and Wilson. The wives of five presidents were ministers' daughters—Mrs. John Adams, Mrs. Millard Fillmore, Mrs. Franklin Pierce, Mrs. Benjamin Harrison and the first Mrs. Woodrow Wilson. This does not account for many other preachers' children who have distinguished themselves in statesmanship, science, literature, or in other fields or for the tens of thousands of other sons and daughters of the parsonage who have consecrated their gifts and energies to the moral and spiritual betterment of humanity, and who under God have been the constructive forces in the up-building of human life and character, and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

The rigid rules and strict discipline of Mrs. Susannah Wesley in the training of the children in the Epworth rectory, however efficient these means were in her days, were not employed in the Wilson home. The principles of divine truths were emphasized and the example of parental living and holy character was kept before the children whose lives unfolded and developed with most beneficial results under such gracious influences in an atmosphere of larger liberty.

The children were brought into vital relation with the Church and the Sunday School. In the last address the writer heard the Bishop make, he said that the Scriptures which he could quote so readily were principally learned in the Sunday School in those times when the Bible was more largely committed to memory than in these modern days of the voluminous helps of the International Lesson Series.

In his boyhood the profound scholarship of his later years gave no foregleams. He was considered a dull and backward youth, never having much to say and always keeping his own counsel. He studied at a classical academy at Winchester, Virginia, during his father's residence in that city as pastor and presiding elder. Later when his father was appointed to Georgetown, D. C., he entered the Columbia University, now known as George Washington University, and shortly after his eighteenth birthday, he surprised his friends by taking the full graduate course and successfully passing the examination for a degree. He was refused the degree, however, on the ground of his youth.

He was converted in August, 1848, at a camp meeting in Stafford County, Virginia, of which his father, who was stationed at Fredericksburg, was in charge.

Shortly after his conversion he turned his attention to the question of a vocation. The mercantile business first attracted him, and he took a position in a dry-goods store which he retained for a week. Medicine became his next interest, and he studied as a disciple of Æsculapius for two weeks. By that time he had his bearings, and the great question of

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his life's calling was determined by the voice of God. In obedience to that call, he entered the ranks of the local ministry of the Methodist Church in the spring of 1852, and served as a supply on Charles Circuit, with Rev. Robert Smith as his colleague.

In 1853, when but nineteen years of age, he was admitted on trial by the Baltimore Conference, a member of a class of thirty-five, the largest on record, of which he was the last survivor but one—the Rev. Ephraim L. Kregloe, of Shepherdstown, West Virginia. He preached his semi-centennial sermon while the Baltimore Conference was in session in Trinity Church in 1902. He was licensed to preach under the administration of his father; was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Scott, March 11, 1855, and an Elder by Bishop Waugh, March 8, 1857.

His first appointment was junior preacher on Jefferson Circuit, with W. G. Eggleston as his senior. During this year, he was the victim of a spiritual depression that drove him to the borders of despair. He had lost an experience which had once blessed his life and his ministry seemed to be barren of fruit. He poured out his soul in a letter to a friend written from Middleway, Virginia, now West Virginia, under date of November 14, 1853, which reveals the agony through which he passed—an experience not unknown to men who have subjected their hearts to the severest introspection and their lives to the most rigid scrutiny.

"You are not alone," he wrote, "in the remorse that you feel for having incurred the guilt of a lost soul.

"I am but too well acquainted with the feeling of which you speak. For I fear that I too have been the

cause of the ruin of more than one. I frequently call to mind the memory of some, now in eternity, whose salvation I might have secured, had I been faithful. God has forgiven and I trust never again to incur such guilt.

"But let not past sinfulness keep you from present holiness. The *perfect love*, which you desire, may even now be obtained, by firm trust in the blood that cleanseth from all unrighteousness. 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' Your mention of perfect love has brought to my mind a period in my religious history, in which my heart rejoiced in the possession of that unspeakable gift. For more than a year I enjoyed a heaven of bliss, which I had thought beyond the reach or ken of mortals. But it has gone. And my spirituality is as a smoking flax. I am unfit for the position I occupy as a preacher of Christ crucified. But I feel that 'woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel,' and I dare not leave the work.

"Oh, how shall I, at the judgment seat of Christ, meet the fearful responsibilities, which press upon me and which I fail to meet here. May God raise the smoking flax to a flame and prepare me to discharge my obligations to Him. But the worst of all with me is, that I see no fruit of my labors. A barren fig-tree! It is all my own fault. I sometimes feel like praying the Lord to remove me and place a more profitable servant in my room. But, no. We must 'learn to labor and to wait.' Pray for me. My daily prayers go up to God for you.

"My voice, in consequence of excessive labors, while in full possession of a cold, has been completely broken down. It is very much shattered and entirely unfit for use. But there is no rest for me or any of us, this side the grave. But I would not care for all my labors, if they did any good. But as I said above, they effect nothing. I fear lest God should curse me, as Christ cursed the fig-tree that yielded naught but leaves. I have preached fourteen times and exhorted half-dozen times or more since I left Baltimore and no good results have followed therefrom. What am I to do? Don't forget to pray for me."

A few months later he had emerged from his bitter experience and was filled with faith and joy. The assurance had returned and the salvation of souls as the fruit of his labors had been a tonic to his soul. A letter dated Berryville, Virginia, January 12, 1854, speaks of the great change in his spiritual vision, an experience which caused him to burst forth in the language of thanksgiving.

“During the year the Lord has disappointed our fears. The church has been blessed with the visitations of His grace, the communities have been led to more serious and careful reflection than is usual among sinners, many of them have awakened, many—and some of them the most desperate—have been converted and the work is still in progress, wherever it has been commenced and still spreading. ‘Bless the Lord, O! my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name.’ All this has not been unproductive of good to my own soul. The old desires of my heart have sprung forth afresh and I have been crying after God with all the earnestness of my nature. And it has not been in vain. My Christian experience has again assumed the character that it bore in 1850—the most joyous year of my life. And while the affairs of life seem to become gloomy, God reveals Himself more brightly to my heart and bids me rejoice in Him; what more can a mortal ask or desire? For a week past there has been a deep tranquillity of spirit, almost unnatural to me, that the most distressing thoughts or circumstances could not disturb. Amid all the exciting scenes through which I have passed and with which I have been more or less intimately connected, my heart has been strangely peaceful. Joy in the Holy Ghost has been the most prominent feature of my experience. And I have found all this singularly consistent with most acute mental suffering. For I have been suffering the most intense mental agony from various causes. And nothing but these riches and fuller communications of Divine grace have supported me and prevented my being overpowered.”

In this letter he referred to his lack of adequate preparation for standing his Conference examinations, but congratulated himself upon the youthfulness of the committee which he thought would not be far removed from its own trials and would, therefore, be more inclined to be merciful. The young preachers may gather encouragement from the fact that even Bishop Wilson in his early years was not without some apprehension and dread of the examination committees.

In 1854 he was sent as second man to Berryville Circuit.

Two letters written this year from Berryville, one dated September 12, 1854, and the other February 20, 1855, emphasize by their contents the passion of the young preacher for the salvation of souls and his sense of the tremendous responsibility of the minister of Christ. It may seem strange to many who have never associated the great Bishop with revivals to read these lines and others that will appear later, but the passion and fire were in his soul, and in his farewell address at the Oklahoma General Conference, when he retired from the active duties of the Episcopacy, he placed tremendous emphasis upon saving men.

In his letter of September 12, we read:

“Our meeting has been one of unlooked for success. . Men who have been living on in sin, totally unconcerned for years past, have been powerfully awakened, and bitter tears of remorse and sorrows have streamed from eyes hitherto unused to weep. This section of country, though but five or six miles from Winchester and within range of our other circuit appointments, has been almost totally destitute of the pure preaching of the

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gospel, until we took it in a few months since. At last the 'kingdom of God has come' to this people and 'they receive it gladly.' We took seven or eight into the church last night and several more are yet to join. We shall form a class immediately, which, though small in its commencement, we intend and trust shall exert a great influence upon the community and be the nucleus of a large society to spring up in after days. May God carry on His work here.

"If the financial affairs of the circuit were unembarrassed, we should most unquestionably have a prosperous year. And, thank God, in other respects we shall have a prosperous year. But 'money matters' press like a dead weight upon the church and crush all the energy and enterprise of the people. And we have, in despite of and in direct opposition to all this, to work them into something better. . . . After one day's rest we go at it again in an adjoining neighborhood and shall try there to get the victory over the World and the Devil again. I cannot express my gratitude to God for the success that has attended our efforts thus far during the progress of the year."

In the letter of February 20, written just before the meeting of the Annual Conference, he wrote of preaching his last sermon of the year, as if he had been in the presence of the Judge of the quick and the dead. Preaching was a terrible thing to him that must be done in the fear of God and with a sense of awful responsibility.

"I have three more sermons to preach before leaving, one at Providence in the mountains, one at Berryville, and the third at an appointment in the country, some six miles from here. I scarcely know what themes to select. I feel like giving *all* the Gospel at each point. But my sermons would then be rather too lengthy. I think, however, that I shall select three of the plainest texts I can find—such as 'Prepare to meet thy God,' 'God be merciful to me a sinner' or the like. I want to leave an

impression on the hearts of my hearers, not in favor of myself, but a permanent religious impression, that shall result in the salvation of those to whom I am sent for the last time. God only can tell when or under what circumstances we may next meet. If it be at the Judgment seat I want to be assured of my freedom from guilt in relation to them. So I shall preach as though my coffin and winding sheet were just before me. As regards the material of my preaching hitherto, I have nothing with which to reproach myself—for I have preached Christ and have tried to benefit the people and not to gratify personal feelings or promote personal reputation. But there is more to be accounted for than my pulpit ministrations, and in other respects I have been woefully defective. I trust that my coming year, wherever it be spent, may be more faithfully given to God than the past. I look for Divine assistance and consequent improvement in every particular."

In 1855 he was junior preacher on East Loudoun in Virginia with headquarters in Middleburg, at the home of Edwin C. Broun, a member of an old Methodist family of Loudoun County. In an undated letter which was evidently written not long after his appointment to this work, he announces his purpose to pay more attention to preaching and improve its quality that year; he places an humble estimate upon his intellectual gifts and his imaginative powers, but large value upon diligent application and the art of extemporizing; the former characterized his entire after-life, and the latter he developed to such a degree that he was always ready to speak upon any subject to which he had given his thought.

The letter shows the principles which he had reasoned out, adopted, and which were among the foundation stones of his marvelous success.

This letter reads as follows:

“I want to pay more attention to my preaching this year and make considerable improvement. There is room for it. And I often feel ashamed of myself that I should be so far inferior to many young men in the Conference who have been at the work no longer than I. My mind, however, is not by any means a superior one and has not had the advantage of the preparatory training that some of them have enjoyed. I have had no teacher who bestowed any special attention upon me, since I was thirteen or fourteen years of age. All that I have acquired since that time and all the improvement that I have made has been by my own unaided effort. Books I have had at my command and I have been an extensive reader, literary, scientific and classical. And I have digested what I read, so as to deduce and retain general principles, not merely facts. But I have never accustomed my mind to develop its resources and never brought it to effort and action until I commenced preaching. Hence my great deficiency, owing, doubtless, very much to the want of intellect, is due in no small degree to the want of habitual mental effort. I am aware that in some respects I possess some advantage over many of my brethren, as in the extemporizing faculty and command of language, which last I attribute to my former familiarity with the dead languages and my habit of investigating the philosophy thereof, and this of course is within the reach of all. But I possess very little originality of mind, and a feeble imagination, both of which are essential to eminence in public speaking.

“But I shall try and make up by diligent application what I lack in native power. And you know that I hold the theory that perseverance and labor are sufficient to remedy all defects. Thus I may at some time become a tolerable preacher and I trust in God that I shall be a successful one. It is a wise and consoling provision of the Gospel that ‘the foolish and weak things of the world are made use of to confound the things that are mighty and wise.’ ”

A few months later he told a friend of a contemplated change in his Conference relations which had probably occupied his thoughts for some time. He was considering transferring to the Pittsburgh Conference. It was a happy providence that interposed at this critical time, as had he made the change his distinguished services would have likely been lost to Southern Methodism.

He said to his friend.

“I have never thought the Baltimore Conference my place. None can succeed in accomplishing much good here unless he possess either very superior talent, or a great deal of business tact. The demand universal is for one or other of these. Unfortunately for me I’ve neither the one nor the other. I know full well the opinion generally entertained concerning me—but I think I am far better acquainted with my own mental resources than any one else can possibly be. And even if I possessed the talent which some ascribe to me, you know that I am so unpopular in my style and manner of preaching that I can scarcely hope to do good anywhere else than in a new, or comparatively new country and among a people essentially different from those of the Baltimore Conference.”

A letter written from Warrenton in the fall of this year revealed the tendency of the mind of the young preacher to Christian philosophy which grew into an absorbing study with passing years.

“But to my mind there is far more to be learned and more profit to be derived from an earnest, strict scrutiny of the movements of the unseen, spiritual world than all the variety of villainy and virtue of the external world can afford. You know that I have always considered human nature as identical in all its various aspects. And hence in judging of the character of men from their actions, I place

myself in their circumstances and seek for the motive that would impel me to such and such deeds in their situation. Accordingly, I endeavor to make myself thoroughly conversant with all the machinery of my own heart, which is the seat of principle and the source of action and, with this view, suffer not an act, or an emotion of my life to pass unobserved, or uninvestigated—always taking care to refer to God's word, as the revealer of the human heart and as the only standard by which to try its operations.

“But alas! for me, I find only the conceptions of evil and the principles of iniquity within myself, with here and there an indication of Divine influence in the form of a contempt for myself and a desire for the right and the true and an occasional principle and emotion manifested, whose only origin could have been God. But few hours of my life pass without the contention of the two natures for the supremacy. There is an almost incessant tempest of strife raging within, intermitted but once in a long while by the peculiar displays of Divine grace, bringing peace to my troubled conscience and wearied heart. I need not say that this is unsatisfactory to me. You know, that bad as I am, I can never rest quietly under the dominion of sin, nor be satisfied with a mere, partial, inefficient resistance, almost invariably succeeded by long, bitter, *unavailing* repentance. Stability of Christian character, steadfastness of purpose, entire victory over and eternal death to sin are what I require in order to have *peace*. Is not the Gospel as strict in *its* demands? I am sick of self, sensual gratification, sin. God knows I long to be freed. But such has been my habit so long, that I seem to myself to be doomed to it for life. If ever man could use Paul's wail ‘O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’ it is I. True, I am not in utter despair. I take courage from even the feeble indication of the Spirit's influence within me. Jesus can save—Jesus *must* save—Jesus *shall* save me. I know that the earnest struggle that I once more engage in will be—I trust a final—victorious one.”



1. MRS. CORNELIA HOWLAND WILSON (Mother of Bishop Wilson)
2. SUSAN BOND LIPSCOMB (1850) (Later Mrs. A. W. Wilson)
3. SUSAN BOND LIPSCOMB (1853) (Later Mrs. A. W. Wilson)
4. SUSAN BOND LIPSCOMB (1854) (Later Mrs. A. W. Wilson)

In the early part of this year Miss Bettie Lipscomb, a lovely young woman of sixteen, a sister of the lady who afterwards became his wife, died of erysipelas at her home in Baltimore. The future Mrs. Wilson remained by the bedside of this loved sister all night, and when the delirium would lapse for an interval and a lucid moment come, she talked to her of personal salvation and had the joy of seeing her accept Christ before passing to the spirit's world. The letters of consolation this young preacher but twenty years of age wrote to his fiancée will bring comfort to other hearts that have passed through the waters. They are strong and Scriptural in thought, apt and beautiful in diction, and reveal the wealth of tenderness and sympathy of the heart from which they came.

Both are reproduced. When the first was written, the tidings of the death of Miss Lipscomb had not reached the writer.

"When you wrote to me that Bettie was ill, you did not mention the disease and it was not until Bro. McMullin came from Baltimore and told me that it was erysipelas in the head that I began to entertain any fears as to the issue. I had seen a great deal of the disease and knew that it was very dangerous on account of its constant tendency to the brain and I dreaded the effect upon Bettie's constitution. And now, my worst fears are realized. If not too late and 'if it be possible,' may God in His goodness avert it. Nevertheless not our will, but Thine, O! Father, be done. I have long loved her as one of my own sisters and the blow will fall heavily—very heavily on me. I know how you feel and sympathize with you, for not three years have rolled away since I bade the long farewell to the best beloved of my own sisters and stood by her beautiful corpse and followed it to the home

of all the living. May God sustain and comfort you as He did me in that hour of stern trial and exquisite suffering.

“But there’s a joy in the midst of all this sorrow that is strange to the hearts of those who know not the Gospel. As, ‘dust to dust,’ the frail body is committed to the tomb and the darkness of the grave envelops all that is visible of the beloved one, there’s a voice that rolls with more than earthly melody from beyond the thick gloom of death and thrills through our hearts its glorious assurance ‘I am the resurrection and the life.’ Oh! there is no more death, for Jesus ‘hath abolished death.’ The tomb is not the home of the dead; it is the resting place of the living. We may sorrow at the parting; but we sorrow not as those that have no hope, for we shall meet again. And, thank God, to whatever part of the glorious Gospel of Christ I turn my eye, my heart finds a resting-place in the exceeding great and precious promises so thick-scattered therein. Then, dearest Sue, rejoice in the fullness of the Gospel, thus provided so richly for the most trying circumstances of life and, while suffering the will of a kind and merciful Father, ‘who doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men,’ be thankful that you are a partaker of consolation that, without Christ, would be unknown to you.

“We ought to be very thankful that she has given such expression of her willingness to meet death, even though God should see fit to remove her without a return of reason. But I trust and pray God that your hearts may be, or, if she be now gone, may have been comforted with other and even stronger and clearer declarations of her trust in Jesus. Of her safety I have not, nor do I suppose you have, any doubts. But ah! with all the consolation afforded by the Gospel and the circumstances of her death, I can’t help feeling, as you do, that it is very hard to part with her and have the family circle thus broken in upon; And, again, my heart would pray, ‘if it be possible, let this cup pass from us.’ May God spare her yet a little longer, if she is still living. How I long to see her once more and most gladly, if it were in my power, would

I visit her now. But while I am writing she may be in the better world and all regrets and longings are vain. Give yourself up, darling, into the hands of God, submit to be governed by His will, assured that, painful though it be for a time, it is best and safest in the end. We'll all meet in heaven.

This is the second letter.

"Alas! it is even so. Bettie, *our* dear Bettie, is in heaven. I looked anxiously for a letter from you this evening, *hoping* to hear of a change for the better—but, *fearing* that it could not be so. I received information from Father of her departure and also the joyous assurance that she had died very happily and left a certain testimony behind, from which I infer that God was pleased to return her to reason again. I am truly thankful to God for the consolation that I am sure you experienced from that.

"I have been thinking of and praying for her and all of you since your letter came to hand. And I could not throw off the feeling of sadness that oppressed me. And now I feel as though one of my own sisters had gone. I deeply and truly sympathize with you, dearest Sue, and would willingly bear the burden of your sorrow, if it were in my power. I would offer consolation, but I can't console myself. We know that God is good, and doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men. We know that if we could have seen the end from the beginning, as He has, we should have done likewise. And we can bow submissively and say 'Thy will be done;' but our anguished hearts *will* feel and no consolation can supply that want within, or fill that void in the family circle, or return the familiar sound of that loved voice, or lighten again to our gaze the eye now closed in the grave. It is not the *death*, it's the *separation* that fills our hearts with pain. We know that the spirit lives and is happy—happy beyond our conception; but it lives far from us. It will no more partake of our joys, nor sympathize with our sorrows; it will no more unite with us in social intercourse, nor bear us company in the varied pursuits of life. It still lives;

but years on years must roll away, the trying scenes of time, the conflict with death must pass, the morning of the resurrection, the dawn of eternity must be ushered in, ere we shall again look upon the loved one gone before and have the sorrow and its effects forever and entirely effaced; may He, who wept at the grave of His friend and even, now, thank God, feels for us, comfort all our hearts and sanctify the bereavement to our good. Try, dear Sue, to trust and cling more closely to Him. Most keenly do I feel it and never have the workings of Providence seemed so inscrutable as now.

"But He hath done as seemed good in His sight and He knows what is best.

"May God bless you, darling, and support you.

"I was so much better on Sabbath morning when I wrote to you, that I concluded to try and preach and did so. I preached of Jesus, for I was very sad, thinking of Bettie, and I found my heart full and it was a great relief to tell of the power of the blood that saves from sin. And Jesus was with me and I felt that I was near the cross and my rejoicing in that cross was more than my tongue could tell. My heart was melted and subdued and tinged with sadness, and though it was, throughout the day I thought and spoke of and rejoiced in the cross of Christ."

CHAPTER III.

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF THE ITINERACY.

In the spring of 1856 Rev. A. W. Wilson was appointed junior preacher of Patapsco Circuit. Shortly after going to his new work he was the victim of an accident that nearly cost him his life. Like many other Methodist preachers he was fond of a mettlesome steed, and his fondness was in proportion to the spiritedness of the animal. While on East Loudoun he broke and gaited a fractious colt for the father of Mr. L. W. Hopkins, the author of the well known war book, "From Bull Run to Appomattox." This colt showed its appreciation of its training by rendering excellent service for the South in the "War Between the States."

But young Wilson learned from experience that a horse is a vain thing for safety, for he was thrown from his own steed in going to an appointment and narrowly escaped fatal injury. He describes the event in a letter of vivid picturesqueness and philosophizes upon the lessons it taught. But let him tell the story in his own energetic style:

"I have just returned from an adventure * * * which, had you witnessed it, would have excited and terrified your loving heart almost beyond your endurance. I have been within a hair's breadth of the other world and my preservation is due to the Providence of God alone. I started from here a half an hour since to ride to my appointment for tomorrow, thoughtless of danger, anticipating a pleasant trip and dreaming as usual. After riding a few hundred yards my horse, wild generally, more

than ordinarily so today, after a week's rest, got frightened and started to run, for which I cared nothing, and indeed was rather willing to let him go, as I was late, only checking him as he went dashing downhill, to prevent his falling. But as I turned the corner of a lane leading into the pike, I felt the saddle turning off and then ran him over against a bank at the other side of the road so that I might not fall on the stones. The saddle went and I with it, rolling right under the horse's feet. He reared and his front feet were coming right down in my face and neck and then all would have been over with me. But fortunately the bridle rein was still in my left hand and I gave a jerk to one side with that and at the same moment with my right hand gave his legs a blow as hard as I could send it. These saved me—he brought one foot down on my side and the other on my thigh—stumbled over me—fell and rolled down the hill, leaving me, my saddlebags, saddle and everything else in the mud. The worst of the matter is a broken umbrella, broken saddle girth, and myself and fixings plastered with mud. I am safe and unhurt. But I had made my arrangements for eternity and the thoughts of past, present and future passed through my mind with the rapidity of the lightning flash while lying under the hoofs of my horse.

“I thought of the errors of my life—the sins of my youth and the backslidings of my Christian career, and hung upon the cross. I thought of my present condition and I felt grateful that I had a sense of my acceptance with God and ‘was ready to be offered up.’

“I thought of the future and rejoiced in the prospect of Heaven's glory * * * I have heard of the rapidity of thought before—but never experienced it to such an extent, and the rapidity of feeling too, in all its forms and gradations.

“I have been wondering if other minds are like my own. Totally destitute of fear, I lost not for one moment self-possession and, even, amid the wild rush of thought above alluded to, I forgot not to use and devise means for self-preservation and, in case I lived after it, to form plans

for the control of my horse. Is such absolute self-control the lot of men generally?

"You may think this matter one of nature's ordering and so think the question of no moment, or capable only of a general answer. But I have an idea that God has endowed men with specific qualities for specific purposes.

"For instance you meet with some men of iron nerve, great intellect, large souls, grave, determined, energetic—just fitted in every respect for great responsibilities.

"Did you ever meet with such an individual who did not in the course of his life incur those responsibilities? If you observe carefully, you'll find it a general rule that men are placed in the position for which they are fitted by nature. The exceptions are in the cases of those who refuse to submit themselves to the guidance of God—God's Providence. And, even among these, in the majority of instances, those very qualities will originate the circumstances amid which they are fitted to act.

"And taking this into account I have sometimes thought that some particular circumstances of importance to myself and, perhaps, to others, are yet to arise, requiring the exercise of this particular quality of self-possession—or rather the power for which it leaves room. Indeed I sometimes go farther still and become a fatalist. At all times I am enough of one to believe that my whole course through life will be controlled by the Providence of God, as the past has been. I have had some stern lessons to learn at the hand of Providence—but I have always recognized that hand and believe that all these lessons are to find their development and design in my future life. I could not and would not endure life without this belief. Despondent as I naturally am, I should have abandoned my most favorite schemes and important pursuits but for this."

During the summer of his year on Patapsco, he attended a camp meeting at Berryville, and was brought into close association with many of the people he had formerly served. He became so deeply

interested in soul saving and personal work that he remained a week longer than he intended.

An excerpt from an old letter expresses in his own language the exalted privilege and joy he had in leading souls to Christ.

“I know not whether the preacher on B. circuit was grateful to me for the exchange. But I am sure that I now feel grateful to my God for the Providence that so ordered my steps. I went there with a heart to work. As soon as I reached the ground I found two very sweet girls—daughters of the best friend I had on that circuit, a noble, generous-hearted Christian, who went to Heaven last winter, and it entered my mind at once to make their salvation the end of my efforts while there. I felt an intense solicitude for them—prayed for them—conversed with them—appealed to them in private and public by every interest and emotion of humanity and, as day after day rolled away and they still yielded not, though powerfully awakened, I became more and more anxious and endured an almost intolerable agony on their account. But I was resolved and would *believe* even against all human hope. And God favored me. Yesterday afternoon I went to the elder of the two and told her that I wanted to know her decision immediately. If she declined going to the altar, I would say no more to her on the subject this side the judgment seat of Christ. She yielded and I knelt by her until after midnight and then salvation came. Her sister came at night and is still earnestly seeking mercy, or has found it. Her brother, too, went to the altar—so that now all the family are on the way to Heaven. Besides this God made me the instrument of the conversion of six or seven other souls. Indeed the principal part of the exhorting and the conduct of all the prayer meetings (with one exception) and altar work was thrown upon me. I left the place this morning with a clear conscience and a light heart and received from the lips of several newly converted ones and of nearly all the old membership blessing and thanks for my labors. All

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this is very soothing and comfortable to me who so seldom sees any fruit of my labors. I feel much strengthened by it and am in better mood for the work of our own camp. I am more cheerful and joyous than I have been for many long months. I am looking now and waiting for yet larger evidences of the favor of my God. Indeed I hope yet to be a *Christian*. God help me. You must not fail to pray for me.

"Tomorrow we expect the Revs. N. Wilson, J. S. Martin, B. B. Hamlin, R. D. Chambers and one of the Caroline St. preachers, to open our work for us. Good enough for a commencement."

A letter written from Germantown, August 24, 1857, describes a very successful camp meeting in whose preaching and other services he took a very prominent part. In those days a tremendous emphasis was placed upon soul saving, and camp meetings and revivals were a large part of the labors of the preachers. He writes concerning this meeting:

"The Camp Meeting was very successful—the most remarkable in many respects that I ever attended. The preachers were B. H. Nadal, John S. Martin—both of whom inquired after and sent their kind regards to yourself—J. W. Wolfe, I. N. Eakin, F. C. Tebbs, T. B. McFalls (Mat Swink's old friend), J. Engle, J. Graham, the circuit preachers and your humble servant. None of us hurt ourselves preaching. Sermons were good—but ordinary. No special feeling displayed. Nor was any marked interest apparent upon the part of the membership. And yet, despite of coldness and difficulties, the work went on. Several times during the meeting I think there must have been fully two-thirds of the unconverted part of the congregation seeking religion.

"Many families—Presbyterians by birth and training and holding old prejudices against Methodism, were converted entire. It is impossible to say what the

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numbers were. Fifty-six names were taken and very many left the ground before they could be reported."

The Conference of 1857 sent him as preacher in charge to Warm Springs.

It will be observed that the subject of this sketch was junior preacher on each of his first four charges, for at that time it was the custom to train the young preachers on the large, old-fashioned circuits under older men of larger experience and wisdom. It is doubted whether we have greatly improved upon the plan of our fathers.

On March 4 of this year he was married to Miss Susan Bond Lipscomb, daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. Philip D. Lipscomb, of Baltimore. It was an evening wedding in which four groomsmen and a corresponding number of bridesmaids took part.

The newly wedded couple journeyed to the bridegroom's new appointment in a buggy, the trip covering an entire week, but the young bride declared repeatedly afterwards that she had never enjoyed anything like this primitive bridal tour to the mountains.

But the romance and poetry of their lives were succeeded by hardships, chief of which was their enforced separation after three months of each others' companionship. The young wife because of illness was compelled to go to Charles Town, West Virginia, then in Virginia, and make her home with her husband's father and mother where she could receive the proper medical attention, while the young husband wrought on his mountain charge. It would have been more than human for him not to have chafed under this arrangement, especially as he

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was unable to provide his wife with the comforts she needed because of the scarcity of money. He received that year the munificent sum of \$130.

A letter written to his wife from Warm Springs, September 1, 1857, reveals untoward conditions which are known to but few of our preachers of the present day; a story of poverty and suffering:

“And so you remain, my own dearest wife, in Charlestown* until spring? I feel very, very sad and lonely and the thought of so long a separation is intolerable. But I cannot say nay to the plan.

“Money is so scarce—or so hard to get hold of that I begin to doubt if the circuit will pay the expenses already incurred. To add to these would of course only add to the burden of debt.

“But I am by no means satisfied with such results. ‘What God hath joined together let no man put asunder’ The only time that I could spare to come to see you—my very precious love—is the week that I have engaged to give to the Lewisburg Camp Meeting, and if I could get a release from that engagement I do not think I can procure money enough to pay my expenses down and back. And I fear that I shall be in the same situation when Christmas comes. I have not paid one dollar of the board due at the Hotel.

“All that I can secure I must use for that now. So we must fain submit to wait until the way is open and the means provided. I send you four dollars—all that I have excepting some small change that I can’t send by mail. I shall want none for myself. And if this should not be sufficient for your purposes, get what you want and have it charged to me. Any of the Charlestown merchants will credit me.

“My love, you will not allow yourself to be unhappy in view of our absence from each other. I shall love you

*Charlestown is now written Charles Town to prevent its being confused with Charleston, a city in the same state.

as much—or more than if I were with you; for I know that you are denying yourself and submitting to this painful separation for my sake.”

The publication of the following personal letter as well as the preceding one is almost an invasion of the sacred precincts of the inner lives of this young couple, but it is the only means of presenting a true picture of their trials and re-creating in some measure the atmosphere that surrounded them. His sacrifice and faith under such circumstances will hearten and strengthen others who are following in the way which he trod in pain. The spirit of Paul whom he made the subject of his profoundest study and his most reverent thought reveals itself in these words which give the relative values of the present life and the one to come:

“My thoughts have been of you and the longings of my heart have been towards you. Life is almost burdensome and but for the unfailing resource of Christianity I could not endure my present position. But God, who ‘tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,’ does not forsake me. And very often when most depressed and almost in despair, there is a sudden, almost overwhelming manifestation of my Saviour to my consciousness that dispels all gloom and calms my troubled heart. I can almost say with Paul, ‘I glory in tribulations’—‘I glory in mine infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.’

“You see I am learning those lessons of wisdom that may be derived from every trouble and that in the end cause us to thank God for the trouble. Most certainly the peace of God that passeth all understanding strangely keeps my heart and mind and whatever the result of this dispensation may be I shall enjoy the consciousness that I have done my duty and, if it end only with death, my paean of victory shall ring from my lips—‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the

faith.' And will not you, my love, join with me in the triumph? Would you not partake with me in the joy of any great success here? And in this greatest of all triumphs—the success of life—the achievement of its glorious purposes—ought not and would not your heart, quail as it might in view of the sad separation—would it not yet swell with delight at the triumph and in view of the glorious results to be realized in another and nobler life?"

Despite his trials he had a most successful year on Warm Springs Circuit. He knew nothing of the arts of the diplomat in preaching, but like the prophets of old cried aloud and spared not. He condemned sin and proclaimed the atonement of Christ and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit as its only cure for the sinner. In speaking to a friend of the last sermon he expected to preach on the work, he said:

"My topic will be the 'Sins, punishment and pleas of the Church.' 'What wilt thou say when He shall punish thee?' my text. If they have never thought and felt before, they shall do it next Sunday—God being my helper."

There was a strong movement for his return headed by men whom he thought he had mortally offended by his preaching, some of them promising if the Conference sent back this fearless denouncer of sin and advocate of truth to increase their subscriptions five-fold. He was amazed at his popularity and wrote concerning it.

"God has strangely given me the hearts of the people. It is a perfect mystery to me. I have been a poor pastor. You would pronounce me yourself unsociable and rather reserved in manner and character. Many better preachers than I have served the same people and been within their

reach for another term. But I have yet to travel a circuit when I was not asked to return. I have acquired an influence and power over the people that others far superior to me have failed to secure. How is it? Not by pulpit power certainly—not by the ‘winningness’ of manner—not by any effort on my part—for I have never sought or *deserved* such popularity. It is altogether incomprehensible to me. As regards my return here, I can only repeat what I have said before. I leave it to Providence to control the matter. If sent back without a word for or against it on my part, I shall come willingly. The future direction of events and their issue I must leave to the same Power above.”

Notwithstanding the desire for his return and his willingness to be returned to Warm Springs, the Conference following its godly judgment sent young Wilson to Blue Sulphur, a circuit in the same general neighborhood but paying a much larger salary—\$250 all told.

On Blue Sulphur he had a notable revival at Asbury, one of the appointments, in which many substantial people were converted, the father of Rev. John A. Anderson of the Baltimore Conference being among them. The holy influences of this meeting linger today in that community as an abiding benediction.

In after years as Bishop, he recalled those days marked by supernatural power, his memory retaining the most vivid impressions of them. On one occasion he spoke of them in this manner:

“When I was a young preacher, I couldn’t do much preaching, but they bore with me. I was wandering along there on the mountains of Western Virginia, telling them what I knew, which wasn’t much, about the gospel, when one of the most remarkable revivals, the most remarkable,

I may say, broke out, under my ministry in an isolated region up in the mountains of one of the counties of Western Virginia, Greenbrier County in West Virginia now. It was nothing but a little pretty-well-worn-out shanty. It represented fairly the average life of the community. Their homes were very much of the same grade and style. We had the rough wooden seats, without backs to them; and it had one of the high pulpits—box pulpit—and it had no chancel railing at all, just a few seats set along there when the sacrament was to be administered; but I saw that house, night after night for a month, ablaze with the glory of God as I never saw any other building on earth; and I heard there songs that had never been sung in any of the costlier temples of earth, and men got down there and lost themselves, absolutely and completely, in their consciousness and sense of God's presence and God's overwhelming power working in them; I say, I saw that thing going on night after night, for weeks and weeks together.

"It was a marvelous thing. It was in the fall when the wonderful comet spread through the skies, in 1858; it lightened my way to church night after night. It spread out there as perhaps the most magnificent attestation of God's sense of majesty and beauty that had ever flashed across the sky. It was a wonderful thing, with its great, long, saber-like tail that reached almost across the horizon, while its central glory reached up into mid heaven, and that followed me night after night, and under the inspiration of a scene like that, I went into this—almost a hovel, very little better—where the people gathered crowded, where they had to come miles to it, and there settled to hear the Word of God, and they fell in trances, and they shook, and hundreds were converted there in that sparsely-settled community."

In 1859, failing in health, which had never been robust, he took a supernumerary relation, moved to Baltimore and held an official connection with what was then known as Columbia Street Church.

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In 1860, he again entered the effective ranks and was stationed at the historic Eutaw Street Church, Baltimore, beneath whose pulpit the bones of Asbury had reposed for forty years and under whose roof some of the momentous gatherings of early Methodism had been held.



1. MARY LIPSCOMB, Sister of Mrs. Wilson (Mrs. THOMAS FITZGERALD)
2. REV. and MRS. PHILIP LIPSCOMB, Parents of Mrs. Wilson
3. REV. and MRS. A. W. WILSON (1857)—the year of their marriage
4. A. W. WILSON and his little sister-in-law, NANNIE LIPSCOMB

CHAPTER IV.

PERILOUS DAYS OF THE SIXTIES AND SOUTHERN METHODISM IN BALTIMORE.

It is necessary at this point to introduce a segment of Baltimore Conference history to account for the isolated position of Bishop Wilson and several other preachers in Baltimore during the "War Between the States," and their service in heartening and conserving the forces that established Southern Methodism a few years later in that city.

When the General Conference of 1844 divided the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Baltimore Conference adhered to the Church, North, but at its session held in Staunton, Virginia, in the spring of 1861, it severed its relation from the Buffalo General Conference of that Church. The outbreak of the war and the establishment of military lines between Virginia and Maryland prevented the Conference from holding its next session in Baltimore as had been previously determined.

A part of a statement of our work in Baltimore, prepared by Rev. Thos. E. Carson, at the request of Bishop Wilson, is reprinted from the Conference War Minutes. It describes an unparalleled situation in the history of Methodism—three Conferences bearing the same name meeting in the spring of 1862.

"Three Conferences," according to the statement, "each composed of a part of the one Baltimore Conference, as it was in Staunton the year before, met at the time appointed, March, 1862, in as many different places. One in

Harrisonburg, Va.; another in Baltimore City, Light Street M. E. Church, and the third in the same city, in the counting-room of a friendly merchant. The first (Harrisonburg) was composed of *a majority* of the Baltimore Conference, and it held firmly to its action of the year before in Staunton, Va. The second met under the authority of the M. E. Church—its discipline of 1860—which had been rejected the year before by a large majority of the body as whole. The third, composed of five members, met in full sympathy and accord with the Virginia part of the Conference and under the authority of the discipline of 1856.

“The Conference that met in Light Street Church, Baltimore, had presented for its action a resolution, in substance as follows:

“‘That, as the unavoidable absence of the Ministers and Members of the Conference within the Confederate lines would prevent their concurrence in any action in reference to the resolutions adopted at the Staunton Conference, therefore nothing should be done inconsistent therewith, and that we agree to await the time when the entire Conference can meet again in peace and harmony.’

“It so happened that the Staunton minority of '61 was the Baltimore majority of '62, and the proposal was promptly rejected by the Conference, and an action was taken ‘to repudiate, as null and void, the action of the Baltimore Conference at Staunton, and to consider all members, not answering to their names, as having withdrawn from the Church.’ In anticipation of a probable action of this kind, and to be consistent with the action of the Staunton Conference, the five preachers composing the third Conference of that date were not present at the Light Street Conference on roll call, nor took part in any of its proceedings. They, with their Virginia brethren, were pronounced ‘Withdrawn.’ ”

Perhaps the source of the greatest embarrassment to this Conference was the fact that it was without a journal. John S. Martin, the secretary of the Conference of 1861, was in charge of the records.

He had been pastor of the Charles Street Church, but when the long expected hostilities commenced, he succeeded in reaching Virginia and subsequently the records succeeded in following him.

He did not take these records with him, as was supposed, but left them in the care of Rev. J. W. Perry. For safe keeping, Mr. Perry took them to the Eutaw Street parsonage and made Rev. A. W. Wilson, the pastor, their custodian.

Shortly afterward, the Federal authorities (Baltimore was at that time under military rule), at the behest of the Church, North, tried to get them, and searched the parsonage in vain. Rev. A. W. Wilson had seen the drift and had them removed and hidden in a cotton warehouse, with the consent of one of its owners, Dr. Thomas E. Bond. At the proper time they were boxed and shipped to Dr. Martin via Fortress Monroe, who received them safe and sound at his home in Lexington, Virginia. The Bishop laughingly told the author not long ago how he had outwitted the Federal officers by sending these records to the warehouse in a cart, having carefully covered them with tarpaulin.

At the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1864, the Committee on Annual Conference Journals reported that the journals of all the Conferences were before them, except those of the Baltimore Conference, which, it stated, "were stolen by one J. S. Martin." But at the Centennial Conference, which met in Baltimore in 1884, in which both Churches participated, this same J. S. Martin was unanimously elected secretary. It does not seem that the alleged crime of 1862 was re-

membered against Dr. Martin by the brethren of the other side. Dr. Martin was a prominent member of our Conference and its efficient secretary to the time of his death; his commanding personality, his deep rotund voice, and his rare qualities of heart and mind made him a preacher who never failed to command the interest and admiration of men, and to win them to the kingdom of Christ.

Of course, the action of Rev. A. W. Wilson in declining to affiliate with the new Conference and firmly adhering to the old one cost him his pastorate of the Eutaw Street Church. With Revs. Ezra F. Busey, Thomas E. Carson, William J. Perry, and John A. Williams, kindred spirits, who also were caught in Maryland when the military lines were drawn, he remained in Baltimore during the war. A. W. Wilson and his associates naturally formed the leadership of the little band of Methodists who continued loyal to the old Conference which was compelled to hold its war sessions in Virginia. His invincibility in argument, his genius for organization, his fearlessness in the cause of truth, and his martyr-like spirit for the right, made him conspicuous in the public eye as a young man of unusual parts. These five preachers held the third Conference with Rev. Ezra F. Busey, much the senior of the others, acting as president—a Conference notable for its uniqueness of character. The business session took the form of several questions with answers which were fraught with far-reaching consequences to our work in Maryland.

The interest that attaches itself to them after a half century may justify their publication here.

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"Question 1st. Shall we attend as members of the Baltimore Conference of the M. E. Church, now in session in the Light Street Church?

"Answer. We cannot, if we still hold to our Annual Conference action and still believe the Buffalo General Conference did wrong to this section of the church by its 'New Chapter' enactment.

"Question 2nd. What shall be our attitude toward our brethren in Virginia, who, because of the war, are unable to meet in Baltimore at this time as agreed upon last year?

"Answer. We shall hold firmly to our connection with them, and act for the church in harmony with them, as far as possible, till we may again come together in one body.

"Question 3rd. What is our present position on the question of separation from the Methodist Episcopal Church?

"Answer. We see no reason for changing our opinion or regretting the action of our Conference last year.

"Question 4th. What shall be our relation to each other as preachers?

"Answer. We shall continue as heretofore—*Brethren* in the same Church, Conference and cause, and will faithfully stand by each other for our mutual help, as need may require and ability serve. We will also co-operate in all ministerial work."

Four appointments were established, at each of which four of the preachers preached in turn; the fifth, Rev. William J. Perry, taught a school for his support. The work was rearranged each year to meet changing conditions until 1866, when these preachers had the opportunity of rejoining their comrades of the old Baltimore Conference. During those trying times in Baltimore, this movement was labeled by its opposers "organized disloyalty," and

young Wilson was threatened with all sorts of ills, including hanging.

A few months before his death, in talking of his experiences of the early sixties, the Bishop related to the writer this incident of a crisis upon which hinged the fate of Southern Methodism in Baltimore. He said that one day he met one of his officials on the street, seemingly agitated and not going in the direction of his place of business; a little later he met another moving in the same direction, and naturally asked him what was the matter. He was informed that these two gentlemen had called a meeting of the official board and had determined to disband the organization, as they could not longer stand the tremendous pressure, the very safety of their families being hazarded by their course. But the intrepid preacher replied: "You can do what you please, but you have no authority to disband the organization. You and others can resign, but I will fill your places, and the work shall go on. I will preach next Sunday as usual." This adamant attitude of their young leader so strengthened the laymen that they gave up all idea of disbanding.

Nearly every sermon was preached under the espionage of a military spy. Occasionally uniformed officers made their appearance at church. One Sunday night when Rev. A. W. Wilson was preaching at the New Assembly rooms to a large congregation from the text, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear," etc., he noticed several Federal officers enter the hall. Their presence caused suppressed excitement, as it was thought the arrest of some members of the congregation was their mission. The minister

paid no attention to them, but went on with his service. One of them proved to be Gen. John A. Dix, who when urged the next day to arrest the preacher, said: "Gentlemen, I will not arrest that man. I heard him preach last night, and if his ministerial accusers had preached the gospel as he preached it, we should not have had this war." It might be interesting to know that General Dix was the father of Dr. Morgan Dix, for many years the rector of Trinity Church, New York; and it is reasonable to believe that the father of so prominent a churchman was a competent judge of gospel preaching.

It may not be without interest to give the names of those who formed the quarterly Conference in Baltimore under these trying conditions—a Conference, composed of men of marked intelligence and loyalty to great principles, that is worthy of a most honorable place in the history of our Church. The descendants of these men and their wives, as noble as their husbands, can feel justly proud of such an ancestry. Here are the names and the principles to which these men subscribed:

John M. Buck, Charles J. Baker, John W. Bruff, Dr. Alexander F. Dulin, Samuel G. Miles, J. B. Brinkley, Gersham Broadbent, Charles Towson, Samuel H. Randall, Leonard Passano, William R. Barry, the Diggs Brothers, Charles and Joseph Shipley, T. J. Magruder, Thomas Norris, Daniel Shipley, Elisha Carback, F. A. Lawrence, Wesley Starr, Carvill H. Carson, Samuel Burnette, John W. Massey, William J. King, Milton D. Mettee, and John C. Smith. With these laymen were associated

Revs. J. Newman Hank, Joseph H. Spangler and John Poisal, supernumerary preachers, and Rev. Thomas E. Bond, M. D., a local preacher.

This was the platform upon which they stood:

“Resolved, We cannot conscientiously submit to the jurisdiction of the Buffalo General Conference, nor become members of the Church under the new Discipline of 1860.

“We furthermore avow our continued adherence to the Discipline of 1856. We acknowledge no other. In this position as a Church we intend to stand, being influenced by no political consideration whatever, and we and other churches and congregations associated with us, assure our people and all who may unite with us, that there shall be neither political nor social distinctions in our midst; nor will any interference with matters of state be allowed either among the ministry or laity.

“As members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, *independent* of the General Conference of 1860, we shall know no change of doctrine, principles, or usages of Methodism. All we ask of the ministry is to confine themselves exclusively to the one work of ‘spreading Scriptural holiness over these lands,’ and preach ‘Christ and Him Crucified.’”

February the eighth, 1866, was a happy day in Alexandria, Virginia, when after the war clouds had disappeared, and peace had returned, the old Baltimore Conference united with Southern Methodism, and these preachers rejoined their comrades of other years and brought this body of faithful laymen under the authority and administration of the Church of which their Conference had become a part.

Dr. John J. Lafferty, that past-master in the art of reminiscence, was present at the gathering. He has left on record a graphic description of that historic Conference.

"The Virginia section of their Conference had been desolated. The Shenandoah Valley was scorched by cinders of barns, mills and homes. Hardly a hoof was left to make a print on its paths. Casting their lot in with the Southern Methodists would provoke personal ostracism, political persecution. If they had elected to follow their late comrades into the Northern Church, their way would have been carpeted with flowers. Missionary money would supply salaries, homes and Churches.

"In the Church at Alexandria came to pass during the sittings of this body an event illustrating the highest grandeur of the soul. A member of the Conference was the moderator. The roll was called; name by name answering affirmatively for association with the Southern Church. The hour and act were surcharged with resolute purpose. Cromwell's Ironsides never bore faces more fixed with stern decree of the heart. No tear swelled under the lid, for every eye glittered like a sphere of fire.

"When the list of ministers had been recited and the vote recorded, it remained only to receive a bishop of the church of which then the Baltimore Conference was a part. The door presently stood ajar. Amid profound silence and suppressed emotion, the noble presence of Samuel Regester, with a certain majestic mien, appeared. Behind him walked John Early, bishop of the Southern Methodist Church. Closely after came the superb Roszel. There was utter absence of ceremony. The dignity of the transaction fell in fitly with this quiet gravity. The bishop took up the routine of the session as if the issue could not have been otherwise. And it could not. They enlisted with men kindred to them in character and lofty impulse.

"These Christian chieftains charged the air and audience with their own resolute valor. It will be a distinct loss, if the achievements wrought by this band, with these centurions, are not preserved on the unperishing parchment of pages that pass through the printing press."

There is pathos in the pastoral address issued by the Conference of 1866 to its constituents, and

martyr-like devotion to duty in every line. These heroic preachers were turning their faces to a country of smoking ruins and desolate hearthstones. Its most valued possessions had been swept away. Nearly every home was a place of mourning. But God's people were there to be guided and comforted. A paragraph from this address is quoted to bring back the atmosphere of those days.

"Perhaps," it says, "when you receive us you must go away from the houses of God you have built, from the graveyards you have enclosed around your fondly remembered dead. You must give us as you can of the little oil and the few cakes you have. Temporarily you will be poorer for your love to us. In all worldly respects you will find us anything but profitable. But we know you, and God knows both you and us. We solemnly and fearlessly appeal our cause to Him. With regard to temporal things, He shall think for us. We, by His help, will think only of things that minister to salvation."

This record would be lacking in completeness without some statement of A. W. Wilson's relation and contribution to Baltimore Southern Methodism since the time he took such a prominent part in its establishment. He was peculiarly identified with it, for from its beginning to the time of his death, with the exception of a few years his residence was maintained in Baltimore and his family were active members of Trinity Church. He regarded our Church in Baltimore as a father regards a loved child, and was always particularly interested in the appointments to the Baltimore Churches.

It may not be without interest to speak of the growth of Baltimore Southern Methodism so long under the eye of Bishop Wilson.

As is well known, Baltimore is the home of some of the most notable historic shrines of American Methodism. Methodism took a deep root in the monumental city and entered so vitally into its growth and development that Baltimore has become a Methodist stronghold and Methodism a tremendous factor in shaping the city's life. Millions of dollars are invested in Methodist churches, parsonages and schools. More than forty thousand Methodist communicants claim Baltimore as their home. They are distributed among the Methodist Episcopal, the Methodist Episcopal, South, the Methodist Protestant, the Independent Methodist, the African Methodist and the Colored Methodist Churches. Of the 449 Churches, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant, 175, or more than one-third, are Methodist. The city directory lists them as follows: Methodist Episcopal 92; Methodist Protestant 27; Methodist Episcopal, South, 12; Independent Methodist 5; African Methodist 16; Colored Methodist 23.

Southern Methodism, through all the years with no fanfare or pyrotechnic displays, has quietly done its distinctive work in Baltimore. It has been making a progress which, though necessarily slow, has been sure and steady, as figures will show. The Minutes of 1866 report that when the Baltimore Conference united with the Church, South, there were but 589 members in the part of Maryland covered by the Conference, and 100 of them in Baltimore divided equally between Winan's Chapel and Central Church. Our Church had many friends who were members of the Independent Methodist Churches which, though in sympathy with our cause,

hesitated to become identified with an ecclesiastical organization that had so greatly suffered from the ravages of war. The major part of these sympathetic friends finally came to us.

The question may be asked, where at that time was Trinity Church which has been known throughout the connection as the Bishop's Church. The answer is that, though the present Church edifice was erected during the Conference year of 1864-1865, yet for prudential reasons it was not incorporated under the name of any organization until 1868, but was held by some of its members as their private property. In that year, however, articles of incorporation were obtained, designating this religious enterprise as Trinity Methodist Church. It was not until 1884 that the name of the Church became Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Strong but futile efforts had been made to make Trinity independent. A modified independency existed for a while because of prevailing conditions, but the congregation was always strongly Southern Methodist in its spirit and sympathies.

In 1876, a decade afterward, our membership in Baltimore had grown from 100 to 1,725 and our charges from two to eight. Our churches paid for ministerial support \$11,144.

In 1886, at the close of the second decade, we reported nine charges, 2,034 members and \$8,602 paid on ministerial support.

In 1896, after another period of ten years, the number of charges remained the same, but the membership had grown to 2,555 and the amount paid on ministerial support was \$14,359.

In 1906 the charges numbered ten, the membership 2,418, with \$11,563 paid on ministerial support.

Last year (1916) at the close of the half century we reported twelve churches with a membership of 2,965 and \$15,122 paid on ministerial support.

Our Churches reported at the Conference of 1917 which recently closed, 3,312 members and \$15,416 paid on ministerial support and a proportionate increase along all lines.

It was within the last decade that St. John's Independent Methodist Church on Madison Avenue came to us with a small but choice membership, and about \$40,000 worth of property. The action of this church was the culmination of what might be called a religious romance. Our Emmanuel congregation had had its church edifice condemned by the city authorities because of damage caused by a storm. It was invited by St. John's to be its guest with the understanding that the two pastors alternate in conducting the services. The congregations became closely attached and decided to unite, the union being known as St. John's-Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Has Southern Methodism justified its existence by its fruits, or has it been kept alive by missionary subsidies on account of denominational pride? Cold statistics will tell. During the half century the number of its charges has increased 600 per cent and its membership nearly 3,000 per cent. No percentage of increase on missions or ministerial support can be obtained, as neither item is reported in the Minutes of 1866. It is worthy of note in passing to state that the entire Conference reported but \$454.12 for mis-

sions in 1867, but the sad confession was made by the treasurer that \$3.00 of it was counterfeit. Last year the Baltimore Churches contributed \$2,649 for missions, and \$3,573 to other benevolences, a total of \$6,221 for Conference collections, and received \$1,600 from the Conference Mission Board to help maintain the weaker charges. Therefore, the Baltimore Churches not only paid their own way last year but contributed between \$4,000 and \$5,000 in addition for Conference purposes. The other years will give similar results.

From the standpoint of financial considerations alone, Southern Methodism in Baltimore is a profitable asset of the Church, South. But its material contribution to the general Church is much greater than appears from its ordinary current collections as shown by the foregoing.

It has given to the General Board of Missions the largest gift ever received in its history—the Shipley legacy of about \$180,000. The Board of Church Extension and other Boards have profited no little from contributions from this city.

It has given to the Church one of its greatest missionary agencies. The first Woman's Missionary Society in Southern Methodism was organized in Trinity Church, Baltimore, in the sixties under the name of the Woman's Bible Mission Society. Our other churches in the city followed the example, and subsequently there was formed a federation of Woman's Missionary Societies. This federation was the parent of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions organized by the General Conference in 1878.

It has given to our cause preachers who have occupied and are occupying positions of large responsibility throughout the Church.

Our latest enterprise is the Alpheus W. Wilson Memorial, located on University Parkway and Charles Street, opposite Homewood Park, the new home of the Johns Hopkins University, in the most beautiful section of the city. Its congregation is preparing to build the first unit of a church which when completed will cost at least \$100,000. This church will fittingly perpetuate the name of our great Bishop and suitably care for, not only our own people in that part of Baltimore, but also for Southern Methodist students who come to this world-renowned University for literary and scientific training. The leaders of this church are among our choicest men and women and are intelligently directing their energies, under the leadership of their pastor, to the consummation of this enterprise. This church will not only be monumental in character but of large utilitarian value, for it will greatly strengthen and conserve our Church in this historic city of Methodism.

Southern Methodists of Baltimore are necessarily of a heroic type or they would not be Southern Methodists. The pastors are picked men chosen to lead the people. With charity for all and malice toward none, our Methodism in Baltimore is maintaining the faith of its fathers and preaching the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ which it believes is the sovereign remedy for all the ills of suffering, sorrowing men.

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In 1916, fifty years after the Conference had united with Southern Methodism, the body met in Alexandria, in the same church where this historic event took place, and observed the Golden Anniversary of the occasion. Bishop Wilson was to have made the principal address, but he was ill at his home in Baltimore. He sent this message by the writer to Conference, having dictated it when he was suffering so much pain that he could scarcely speak. It proved to be the last he ever sent to the body and was his parting benediction.

THE MESSAGE.

"In much pain I dictate this message. I regret that I cannot be with you and share the pleasure and profit of your happy occasion. I congratulate you upon a half-century's successful work. The past should stimulate you to larger endeavors for the future. May the blessing of the Great Head of the Church continue to rest upon you.

Affectionately your brother,

A. W. WILSON."

This chapter cannot be more appropriately closed than with a paper which can be aptly entitled "The Beginning of Southern Methodism in Baltimore," written by Bishop Wilson in the fall of 1865, when the events were fresh in his memory, and found among his effects after his death. The paper is published as it was written, except the full name when known is printed in parentheses following the initials used in the paper. It clearly shows that the attitude of the writer to the institution of an independent Methodism at that time was not of the most friendly character.



1. HON. THOMAS WILSON, Grandfather of Bishop Wilson
2. REV. NORVAL WILSON, Father of Bishop Wilson
3. SARAH LOUISE WILSON, Sister of Bishop Wilson
4. CORNELIA HOWLAND, Wife of Captain Daniel Howland,
Grandmother of Bishop Wilson

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PAPER WRITTEN BY REV. A. W. WILSON.

"1. In March, 1862, owing to intolerant attitude of minority of B. A. C. (Baltimore Annual Conference) by accidents of war separated from and relieved of interference of majority of said Conference who were on Southern side of military lines, it was resolved after several consultations among clergy and laity to organize one or more congregations in connection with Baltimore Conference, by that term being understood the majority south of military line. It was, of course, known that there could be no intercourse with that body so long as the war continued, but it was thought best to retain the nominal connection with the expectation of resuming speedily the regular position of a charge or charges under the supervision of that body.

"Accordingly a meeting of all who favored the undertaking was called at the New Assembly Rooms Tuesday morning, March 18th, at which the purpose was fully stated and the fact of the connection with the Baltimore Conference was emphatically announced. If, at that time, the idea of establishing independent congregations, without any denominational connections, was entertained by any parties it was certainly kept out of view.

"2. On Monday, March 17, 1862, a number of persons formerly in connection with Strawbridge M. E. Church, a station connected with the East Baltimore Conference, met at the residence of Chas. Towson, Esq., and unanimously passed the following resolution:

"Resolved That in view of the movement now on foot looking to the formation of an Independent Methodist Church in this city, we hereby form ourselves into an Independent congregation in connection therewith."

"A committee was appointed to wait on Rev. J. H. D. inviting him to undertake the pastoral charge of the congregation.

"A committee was also appointed to attend the meeting at the New Assembly Rooms on Tuesday (next) evening, March 18th.

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"On Wednesday evening, March 19, pursuant to adjournment, the meeting was held at Northwestern Hall on Biddle St. and Rev. A. W. W. (Rev. A. W. Wilson) having been invited to attend stated the purpose had in view in the organization of what was shortly known as Central M. E. Church, distinctly disavowing any purpose of assuming an independent position and declaring the connection of that body with the Baltimore Conference. The action was traced back to and connected with the session of the Baltimore Annual Conference at Staunton in 1861 and declared to be the result of the legislation of the General Conference of 1860. It will be seen from the records of this meeting that discussion was had upon the "proper basis for the formation of a congregation," the most of the views expressed in which differed essentially from those expressed at the former meeting and embodied in the resolution then passed, and that with a view to the better understanding of the action of the meeting at New Assembly Rooms Rev. A. W. Wilson was requested to explain it. It also appears from the verbal report of committee appointed to wait on Rev. J. H. D. that he would consent to become Pastor only on condition that a separate and distinct independent congregation was formed. As the idea of independence was not maintained and he was not called to be Pastor, the fair inference, nay, the irresistible conclusion is that the meeting looked to the maintenance of the connectional relation. Accordingly a committee was appointed for the purpose brought in a report at a meeting held March 26th in the following words:

"The undersigned committee appointed by the congregation which met at the Northwestern Hall, Biddle St., on the 19th inst. to suggest a basis of subsequent operations respectfully recommend an organization in affiliation with the Central Church New Assembly Rooms which report was adopted and the congregation continued in said connection for about two years.

"In the early part of 1864, the churches thus organized having been repeatedly subjected to the tyrannous in-

terference of the military authorities of this city, serious apprehension began to be entertained that their avowed connection with an ecclesiastical denomination in the South would be seized upon as a pretext by the military rulers for breaking them up, and resolutions were offered in the Official Meeting of the Church looking to a temporary dissolution of that connection.

“‘Owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding the first series of resolutions with this object in view was ruled out of order; but at an adjourned meeting of the Quarterly Conference a few nights subsequent, similar resolutions were offered and adopted with but one dissenting voice. It was then distinctly avowed and understood that this separation was but temporary and occasioned by the pressure to which they were subjected under military rule. It may be stated here in corroboration of the foregoing that the movers of the first and second series of resolutions, J. M. B. and J. P. L. (There is some uncertainty about the latter initials, as they are almost illegible. Author), were both thorough advocates of a resumption of the connectional status at the earliest practicable period, never conceived the idea of permanent independence and are both now in connection with the M. E. C. S. (Methodist Episcopal Church, South.)

“‘The erection of this congregation into a separate charge as shown in the report of the meeting held March 23, 1864, was not intended to alter, nor did it alter the purpose hitherto expressed and still and until a much later date held by the majority of those now seeking to maintain a permanently independent organization. It will be seen from that report that the male members at Biddle St. made a request to be set off, which was granted by Quarterly Conference of Central and official body was requested to organize the church which was done. This organization was effected under the provisions of the Discipline of the M. E. Church of 1856, which having been recognized as the law under which the Baltimore Conference should act during its isolation, had been adopted by the male members in so far as it suited their circumstances.’”

CHAPTER V.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

In 1866, Rev. A. W. Wilson took a superannuate relation and chose Baltimore as his home. In 1867, 1868 and 1869 he was listed as a supernumerary. During these four years of cessation from the labors of the itinerant ministry, in order to pay his debts incurred during the war, he studied law, was admitted to the Baltimore bar, and practiced with his brother-in-law John D. Lipscomb, the style of the firm being Wilson and Lipscomb.

He was not long in winning recognition at the bar, and establishing for himself a wide reputation as a lawyer of no mean ability. Had he remained in the legal profession he would have probably been a commanding occupant of the bench, for his keen analytical mind, his habit of thoroughness, his discipline and training admirably fitted him for the judgeship.

But in 1870, when he had in hand the receipts for his last debts, he yielded to the counsel of his friends and the voice of his conscience, and once more entered the active ranks. It is noteworthy that just before starting for Conference to take an appointment he declined a retainer in a single case larger in amount than the highest salary paid in the Conference. His time spent in the study and practice of law was not lost to the Church. Some one has said that a peculiar providence influenced his retirement for a time from the active ministry, for, being endowed

with a legal mind, this early experience enabled him to render great service to the Church in after years.

At this Conference the Bishop appointed him presiding elder of the Washington District to which he was reappointed in 1871 and 1872.

In 1873 he became pastor of Mt. Vernon Place Church, Washington, and continued in this pastorate for four years, rendering invaluable service to that congregation in the national capital in those days following reconstruction.

The perilous financial condition of our Washington church demanded the strongest leadership obtainable. Indeed, this condition called for a special communication from the bishops to the General Conference of 1874. The message was presented and read by Bishop Marvin in behalf of his colleagues, and was received and unanimously endorsed by the Conference.

The paper exhorted the whole Church to come to the relief of the Washington enterprise. It is of historic interest and is well worth reprinting, particularly at this time, when the faith and heroic struggles of our fathers have been rewarded by a dream in marble with architectural proportions in which are exquisitely blended grace, symmetry, beauty and strength—a substantial expression of the interest of Southern Methodism in its work at the national capital.

“COMMUNICATION IN REFERENCE TO THE CHURCH
IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

“To the members of the General Conference:

“Dear Brethren:—Our attention has been called to the financial condition of our Church in Washington City, and

from a consideration of the facts in the case, we deem the matter of sufficient importance to demand your attention at this time.

"Our brethren there undertook, soon after the war, when they were few in number, to build a house which should meet, not their own needs only, but also the wants of our people who might have occasion to visit the national capital. For this purpose they made an outlay far beyond their own ability to meet, and up to this time have been carrying a burden of debt too grievous to be borne. While the house represents us respectably, yet, considered as a representative building at the great central point of the whole country, it is far from being extravagant.

"In carrying this great burden of debt our brethren have been compelled to look abroad for aid; but up to this time the response has been sufficient only to meet accruing interest, and reduce the debt by a very small amount.

"This debt is a distressing incubus upon the local Church, which bears the weight of it, making development and progress almost impossible. Indeed, it is a matter of very painful solicitude with those immediately concerned.

"Let it be remembered that this debt was created in the interest of the Church at large, and that it meets a demand which all feel to be imperative. It supplies our own people visiting Washington City with the ministry of the Church of their choice. Let it be remembered, also, that our brethren there contributed freely at the first, and have now patiently, for some years, borne up under this most trying embarrassment."

In response to the author's request for information concerning Dr. Wilson's Washington pastorate, Mr. James T Petty, one of the old and prominent members of Mt. Vernon Place Church, has written a delightful letter in which he speaks of his association with Dr. Wilson when pastor of the Church. The letter is given a place in this chapter.

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“Responding as best I may to your recent request, I beg to say that my recollection of the late beloved and lamented Bishop Alpheus W. Wilson reaches back to a day in August, 1848, and to a camp meeting at Stafford Court House, Virginia, which both of us attended, and at which both of us were converted. Rev. Norval Wilson, father of the Bishop, who was then stationed at Fredericksburg, was in charge of the camp.

“It was an old-fashioned Methodist meeting, of the type then in vogue, but rare if not unknown in this day and generation, with a crowded mourners' bench surrounded by a jubilant band of earnest, consecrated men and women, who made the air vocal with their songs of praise, and whose prayers were so filled with the love of God that

“‘Heaven came down their souls to greet,
While glory crowned the mercy-seat.’

“Amid such congenial surroundings it followed naturally that two youths—he was several years my senior—trained, as we had been, in Christian homes, where the family altar held without challenge the highest place of honor, and where the very atmosphere seemed instinct with the spirit of worship, would gladly accept an invitation to service in the army of the Lord. And so it came to pass that when the call for recruits rang out upon the summer evening air, in that sylvan temple, we joined the eager throng that rallied under the standard of the cross and gave ourselves up unreservedly to the Captain of our Salvation for time and for eternity.

“Young Wilson, as a penitent, had been kneeling with a companion, about his own age, son of a prominent Methodist of the neighborhood, and as they rose, which they did together, they embraced while their countenances were radiant with the happiness of souls just born into the kingdom. It was a striking picture, and through all the years which have fallen between that starlit scene and the present moment, I have treasured the recollection of it as one of life's most precious memories.

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"At the great separation of 1844, the Wilson family, and my own as well, remained in the communion of the M. E. Church; but in 1866, we cast in our lot with the M. E. Church, South. In 1867, I was enrolled as a member of Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and later on, to my great delight, the future bishop became our local pastor, his pastorate covering the quadrennium 1873-1877

"During this period—in 1876—I was called to the superintendency of the Sunday School, on the voluntary retirement of the late Henry F. Zimmerman, a veteran superintendent, and one of the best and saintliest men it was ever my good fortune to know.

"As I recall Brother Wilson's ministry, its great overshadowing characteristic was the apostolic purity and simplicity of his preaching. The burden of his message was that Pauline declaration—'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' There was never a hint of worldly sensationalism, nor any straining after effect in manner or method with him, but always and under all circumstances, a clear, forceful, conscientious presentation of 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

"Talking, not long since, with a leading layman of our sister Methodism, I spoke of the Bishop as the most profound thinker and masterful logician and reasoner of whom I had any knowledge, concluding with the remark: 'I consider him the greatest preacher in all our connection.' His instant rejoinder was: 'Yes, or in any other connection, and I never miss an opportunity to hear him.'

"He always manifested the liveliest interest in the work of the Sunday School, and, as superintendent, I found a constant inspiration in his counsel and support. He thoroughly believed in early conversions, and I can never forget the joy which seemed to sweep through his great soul one Sunday afternoon, as the Holy Spirit moved upon the hearts of a number of the younger children. It was a gathering then known as 'The Young People's Meeting,' that preceded among us, the organization of the 'Society of Christian Endeavor,' which later, in turn, was succeeded

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by 'The Epworth League.' The room was thronged, and the interest so great that a dozen or more of little penitents knelt for prayer, some of whom were converted, and laid then and there the foundation for lives of Christian usefulness.

"One thing that he stressed with all the earnestness of his nature was the necessity for zeal and diligence in laboring for the cause of missions, and he made it clear that in his opinion a church or Sunday School that was lukewarm, or inactive in this field of Christian effort, was sadly lacking in love and loyalty for the Master.

"Under the stimulus of his direction the school made the largest annual missionary contribution in its history, one class alone raising \$500. The School also pledged itself to the support of a native Chinese student who became a preacher of the gospel to his own people, taking the name 'Vernon Wilson' in honor of both Church and pastor.

"During brother Wilson's pastorate Mount Vernon Place Church, as the present organization of Southern Methodism in Washington, began to extend its borders and enlarge the scope of its activities—a movement, which, in its ultimate result, some years later, brought into our family circle five thriving and progressive Southern Methodist congregations.

"As a further evidence of this growth Mount Vernon Place Congregation on Monday, October 8, 1917, under the direction of Bishop Warren A. Candler, laid the corner-stone of a structure which in its magnificent architectural appointments will be an ornament to the Nation's Capital and worthy to stand as a Representative Church of the great denomination in whose service Bishop Wilson labored so faithfully throughout his long and useful life.

"I am conscious, my dear Doctor Harris, that this is but a feeble and imperfect response to your request, but 40 years have passed since the pastorate ended, of which I have written, and the limitations of memory forbid details which I would gladly supply were it possible."

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In 1877, Dr. Wilson was appointed pastor of Calvary Church, Baltimore, and in 1878 was returned to that pastorate, but at the General Conference in May of that year he was elected Secretary of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

CHAPTER VI.

CALLED TO BE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF MISSIONS.

The General Conference that met in Atlanta in 1878 was a memorable one in the life of A. W. Wilson, for it elected him to an office which became the outlet for his special gifts and energies and which was the beginning of his phenomenal career in the Church. The Baltimore Conference delegation to this body was composed of Samuel Regester, A. W. Wilson, J. S. Martin, Samuel Rodgers, David Thomas, R. R. S. Hough, P. H. Whisner, and S. S. Roszell, as clerical delegates; and Moses Walton, Patrick Hamill, J. H. H. Figgatt, George Law, T. J. Magruder, E. B. Prettyman, James W. Newton, J. Armistead Carter, as lay delegates.

Though occupying a place among the leaders of his own Conference no circumstances had ever occurred in the life of Dr. Wilson to bring him prominently before the connection. It is true that he had been a member of the General Conferences of 1870 and 1874. In the latter with Samuel Regester he had represented the Baltimore Conference in relation to the grounds of appeal of the L. D. Huston case, and was chairman of the committee on fraternal relations from the Methodist Episcopal Church when that body sent its first representatives with greetings to our Church, but these occasions gave the General Conference but little opportunity to judge of his actual and potential ability.

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Previous to this time, as has been intimated, his superior intellect had brought him to the front rank among the brethren of his own Conference, and had attracted the attention of others. Bishop Hoss in his characteristic manner speaks of his first meeting with him and the impressions he received.

"I have known the Bishop since 1868, having met him for the first time at the Baltimore Conference of that year. He stood among an array of noble men, the equal in every respect of the best of them. Samuel S. Roszell, Samuel Regester, Thomas E. Bond, E. F. Busey, and many others whom I should like to mention, were there in their prime. It was beautiful to see the affectionate admiration with which they regarded 'Alph Wilson,' as they familiarly called him. Twice or thrice during the session he appeared on the floor. I cannot forget the ease, the dignity, the definiteness, and the force with which he spoke. It seemed to me that I had not before heard any man who was quite his equal in public utterance. This first impression that I got of him grew into a fixed conviction as the years went by. I was not long in discovering, moreover, that many other persons shared my judgment concerning him. Talking to me once about the late Thomas Guard he said of him without reserve: 'He is the most affluent man in thought and speech that I ever heard.' Some time later I mentioned this utterance to Dr. Samuel Roszell. In a moment that kingly man rose up and said. 'It is not true. Alph. Wilson is himself a more affluent man than Thomas Guard ever dreamed of being.'"

The afternoon session of May 23 of the General Conference of 1878, was extended for the body to elect a Missionary Secretary and the members of the Board of Missions.

The territory generally served by the Church had been swept and devastated by war and almost destroyed by the outrages of the period of recon-

struction. The General Conference knew that it would take a master spirit to awaken the Church to a new sense of life and compel it to look out over its own ashes and sorrows to the regions beyond. The voice that would arouse the people from a state of despondency because of their ruined churches and their own poverty to a sense of obligation to build first the altar of God for a world-wide movement had to speak with the authority and power of a Nehemiah or Haggai. The Conference moved prayerfully and cautiously in the selection of the man for this service.

On the first ballot for Secretary there were 215 votes cast but there was no election. D. C. Kelley and A. W. Wilson, the leaders for the office of large responsibility, received 52 and 38 votes respectively, but neither was near the goal. On the second ballot, 207 votes were cast, of which A. W. Wilson received 108 and D. C. Kelley 69, resulting in the election of A. W. Wilson.

It may be of interest to our readers to see Article 7 of the Constitution of the Board of Missions, as it was in those days, defining the duties of the Secretary and also to know the names of those who composed the members of the Board which co-operated with A. W. Wilson in laying the foundations of a work which has grown to proportions unthought of by many of those pious and wise men.

This is the section from the Constitution as it was amended by that General Conference:

“Article 7 The Secretary shall be a minister of the gospel, and may be a member of any Annual Conference, but shall reside where the Board is located. He shall be *ex officio* Treasurer of the Board, and shall, before entering

upon his duties as Secretary and Treasurer, give good and sufficient security for all moneys that may come into his hands. He shall be allowed clerical assistance not to exceed five hundred dollars per annum.

"It shall be his duty to keep a permanent record of the proceedings of the Board, and to publish an abstract of them in the Church papers; to conduct its correspondence to attend to all its legal business; to prepare its annual report; and to publish monthly (either in a missionary paper or in the Church papers, as the Board shall direct) statements of the condition, needs, and prospects of the various missions.

"He shall receive and receipt for all moneys, counter-sign all drafts, hold the funds of the Board in safe deposit which deposit shall be made by him as Secretary and Treasurer, subject to the draft of the President of the Board, countersigned by the Secretary and Treasurer; but in no case shall such funds be invested in his or any other business. He shall furnish an annual report for publication. His salary shall be fixed by the Board, and all his necessary traveling expenses shall be allowed."

This is the Board as it was constituted at that time:

T. O. Summers, President; N. H. Lee, Vice-president; James W. Manier, Treasurer. Managers. J. S. Martin, Baltimore Conference; W. G. E. Cunningham, Holston Conference; L. S. Burkhead, North Carolina Conference; H. A. C. Walker, South Carolina Conference; W. H. Potter, North Georgia Conference; R. A. Young, Tennessee Conference; P. A. Peterson, Virginia Conference; D. C. Kelley, Tennessee Conference; A. H. Redford, Louisville Conference; I. G. John, Texas Conference; A. R. Winfield, Little Rock Conference; J. W. Lewis, St. Louis Conference; W. F. Johnson (Lexington), Missouri Conference; J. C. Simmons, Pacific Conference.

O. P. Fitzgerald, Pacific Conference; J. D. Hamilton, Tennessee Conference; C. B. Gallaway, Mississippi Conference.

The office of Secretary, as was stated in the foregoing, was combined in those days with that of the Treasurer of the Board of Missions, entailing a multiplicity of duties and details. One of the first moves of the new incumbent was to separate the offices that his energies might be concentrated upon a few things rather than dissipated upon many. With his breadth of vision and foresight he selected the great things and placed such tremendous emphasis upon them as to move the Church to its profoundest depths.

He followed no precedents but blocked out plans and methods that were wholly his own. He traveled throughout the connection and preached and made missionary addresses with tremendous effect. The stricken Church throughout the South felt the impelling obligation of its divine commission to preach the gospel to every nation. Its intelligence was satisfied and its faith quickened to a passion of service.

The missionary anniversaries became the most notable events of the Conference and the very atmosphere became charged with the spirit of missions. The poor rejoiced to lay their offerings upon the altar. Men of wealth with religious convictions were greatly stirred by the truth being put before them in a fashion entirely unknown to them before. This is a specimen of the pungent utterances of the new Secretary, revealing the naked and unpalatable truth which proved to be "sharper than any two-

edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit :”

“The man of fifty thousand dollars who brings five, twenty, or a hundred dollars to the altar of God and says: ‘This is all I have to spare,’ lies to God, as Ananias never did. Tens of thousands are living in luxury, spending money for vanity and pride, gluttony and sensuality, and submitting a mere bagatelle to the use of the Holy Ghost.”

Hardships and sacrifices characterized the journeys of this missionary apostle, particularly in the West where the means of transportation were still of a primitive nature. By stage coach and carriage he traveled rough roads, crossed deserts, forded swollen rivers, climbed mountains and suffered all sorts of bodily discomforts for the Gospel’s sake. On one occasion he carried \$1,200 in gold in his belt by stage and by boat from the state of Washington to San Francisco, because at that time that was the method of conveying money from one place to another. He was never held up nor subjected to accident in that comparatively new part of our country.

He often had rough accommodations, and discomforts to endure; but was at that period stronger than he had been, and only made a jest of them. Once he was in Texas, with Dr. R. A. Young, and the only accommodation for toilet was at the pump in the yard. Dr. Young went down the village street to buy towels, and each pumped for the ablutions of the other.

He always said there was no difficulty in getting money for missions from the Church. All that was necessary was to tell the people, tell them about conditions, tell them how much was needed, and just



BISHOP WILSON'S HOME
The gift of Governor and Mrs. E. E. Jackson in 1902

how it was to be used; they always would respond. He would never ask people for money individually; he made his statements publicly, and left them to apply to their own hearts the fact and the possibility. To illustrate the state of ignorance of the Church at large, at the beginning of his term, he told how he went to one Annual Conference. He was not met; he went to the church, and when the host saw him—recognizing him to be a preacher, he said, “Are you a member of this Conference?” “No,” was the answer. “What is your name?” This was answered and he confessed himself a member of the Baltimore Conference. In reply to various questions he finally stated that he was Secretary of the General Board of Missions and had come to present his work; and was introduced to the Conference, in the temporary absence of the presiding Bishop, as “the Rev. A. W. Wilson, missionary secretary of the Baltimore Conference, seeking aid for missions.”

His deliverances from the pulpit and rostrum were reinforced by the “Advocate of Missions” of which he was the editor. Its strong editorials and news from every mission field in the world made it a force to be reckoned with by the indifferent and the opposer of missions. That the cause was placed upon the heart and conscience of the Church as never before, and that the Church was awakened to an overwhelming sense of its duty and responsibility was the natural consequence of a quadrennium of such remarkable mental and spiritual activity.

In response to the Board of Missions for all of the available information it could furnish for this chapter, in the absence of Dr. W. W. Pinson, the

General Secretary, because of illness, whose estimation of Bishop Wilson's work is very high, Mr. J. D. Hamilton, the Treasurer, sent two extracts from the reports submitted by Dr. A. W. Wilson for 1879 and 1880 which throw light upon the Scriptural basis upon which he built his work.

Mr. Hamilton wrote:

"On beginning his administration he made some readjustments in the office force in the interest of better book-keeping and larger attendance to its correspondence. He then secured the services, free of charge, of an honorable and prominent merchant, Mr. J. W. Manier, as Treasurer of the Board. These arrangements left him free to visit the Church at large in the interest of the great cause of missions, and there are traditions throughout the Church that never was the cause so ably and forcibly presented as it was by him during these four years. Many are now living who can testify to the soul stirring speeches made by him, and under this ministry there was a revival of the Church's interest in missions which amounted to a new birth. He so wrought upon the conscience of the people that there was an immediate increase in the interest of missions which began to show itself in the increased contributions for the cause. In five years from the beginning of his administration the contributions for foreign missions increased from \$65,139 to \$160,272 per annum. There was of course an equal enlargement of missionary work in the foreign fields. I suppose no well informed Methodist doubts that the present general interest in the cause of missions throughout our Church had its rise in the almost apostolic labors of this Pauline man during the four years of his incumbency of the office of Missionary Secretary."

FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT 1879.

"The whole question of missions is so intimately related to the religious life of the Church that it is at the risk of its own extinction that any Church lapses into in-

difference or hardens into opposition to the work. Many men and women in these times have found, according to their explicit avowal, a great accession of spiritual power, an increase of faith, a widening of Christian sympathy and joy in Christian fellowship, and deeper, truer love to their Lord, and keener delight in communion with Him, consequent upon their hearty, active, self-sacrificing interest in the mission work. It is not strange that it should be so. Such interest is the expression of true, earnest sympathy with the Lord in His love and His purpose, of simple, sincere faith in His word and His power, and of obedience to His highest, most comprehensive command. His love is to all men. He died for all; He will draw all men to Him; He will have all to be saved. His purpose is to overcome all opposition and make Himself known in all the earth. He is expecting until His enemies be made His footstool. Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess Him Lord. He has bidden the Church carry out His purpose with simple faith in His presence and power. 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' The great command, the commission to the Church, is imperative, and appeals still to the conscience, faith, and love, of every believer. 'Go ye into all the world.' Neglect of that is frustration of the Lord's highest purpose. Obedience to it is the guarantee of individual life and ecclesiastical prosperity. The Church will thrive upon its sacrifices to fulfill that command. Faithful to that, it cannot die, though it want many things.

"Our responsibility is great. It is high time for us to put off the limitations by which we have restricted our operations, and strive to give the fullest expression to the word and will of our Lord. We have no measure of obligation but His will. We are bound to break away from every prejudice or constraint that would hold us to a lower standard. Duty is all in one saying, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Now we make our appeal to you in view of the urgent and increasing demands of our work. We have been afraid to respond to the calls of our missions, lest we should go in advance of the Church's willingness, and have felt con-

strained to deny many things that seemed to be necessary in the growth of these fields. Yet our contributions show a poor average for our membership. Will not our preachers with deeper solicitude urge this matter upon the conscience of our people, and appeal to them by the love of the Lord Jesus to sustain His cause? Go beyond our estimates, and give what is really needed. Not one dollar is wasted. A strict and minute account of all expenditures is open to the entire Church, and we shall rejoice to let you see with what care your contributions are applied to best uses. Let our rich men of their abundance give liberally, and the poor give out of their deep poverty, that the riches of their liberality may abound, and that they may have a full share in the great reward.

“We beseech you, brethren, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.

“A. W. WILSON.”

FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT 1880.

“We bring to the Church the report of another year’s work in its mission-fields, together with the statement of supplies furnished for the prosecution of that work, and plans projected and provision made for the coming year. The figures furnished by the Treasurer show an increase in collections in almost every Conference, and thus indicate a growing appreciation of the importance of this vital enterprise. This result cannot be attributed to spasmodic effort and short-lived enthusiasm. Many signs concur to evince that the mind of the Church is becoming clearer, and the conscience is being awakened upon this question. There is a more thorough and earnest discussion of the character and claims of missions in all our Church papers than at any previous period, and a more urgent call for efficient plans and vigorous work. There have been many ready and generous responses to special appeals for help made during the year. There is a more widespread sense of responsibility among our people, and an expression of purpose to rise among the measured demands to the height

of God's requirement in this matter. In many instances whole communities of believers have declared their intention to pass beyond assigned limits, and by free-will offerings magnify the grace of God. There is a spirit of inquiry abroad which promises enlargement and freedom of movement. These and many other tokens foretell the disfranchisement of the Church from the prejudice, narrowness, and confinement of tentative, feeble, half-hearted endeavor, and its entrance upon an era of enterprise worthy of its divine relations, endowments, and destiny.

"A Church full of faith and Holy Ghost is always aggressive. The word of the Lord sounds out from it into all places. A lifeless, worldly Church moves nothing, impresses nobody. Numbers and wealth count for little. If the propagation of its style of piety could be effected by means of these, what would be the gain? As was well said some months back, 'When the current religious life is of so low a grade, can we expect God to permit its wide and swift diffusion? We see Him select the few—the advance-guard of disciples—to bear the banner of the cross into the enemy's country. He permits difficulties and dangers to face them, so that all but devoted, heroic souls, may turn back. And so He is today actually diffusing in missionary fields a type of piety far in advance of that found at home, and, in proportion to the number of laborers and the means employed, the results are threefold as great as at home.' In proportion as we shall abandon 'the course of this world,' and yield to higher motives and impulses, and cultivate truer and sounder Christian principles and affections, the missionary spirit will grow, and the successes of the work multiply. When we shall have something to give worth the taking, the world will be ready to receive it. At the same time, by this law of reaction, as old Andrew Fuller found in his Church, there is no surer way of kindling the dying embers into a flame than by fanning them with this spirit of missions. Make this the theme of thought and study, of prayer and preaching, and bring it to the social and domestic circles of the Church, and you shall have the

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enthusiasm of the Son of God kindled upon the heart, and higher forms and a wider extent of devotion to Christ exhibited than has yet been known.

"We make, then, our urgent appeal to the entire Church. We omit none. To the rich and the poor, to the earnest and self-sacrificing, and the careless and self-indulgent, to the preacher and the people, we bring the Master's command, and charge you by your own imperiled life, and by your deepest Christian joy, by your obligation and indebtedness, and by your hopes for the coming world, see to it that, as far as in you lies, the word of God and the promise of the gospel be given to every creature under heaven. Let not one of Christ's redeemed be able to say, in your presence, 'None cared for my soul.'

"A. W. WILSON, Secretary."

Dr. J. A. G. Shipley, a missionary to China who went out from the Baltimore Conference, attributes our success in that land largely to the administration of Dr. Wilson as Missionary Secretary and his subsequent supervision of that mission field and the practical help and inspiration he brought to it as Bishop. Dr. Shipley has expanded these ideas in this language:

"1. His large part in shaping and directing the affairs of the Mission while Missionary Secretary.

"2. His more direct contact with the work as Bishop in charge of the field. His numerous visits to China—more in number than those of any other Bishop of our Church—his stay on the field of longer duration—he always put the needs of the field to which he was assigned, and the demands there placed upon him ahead of calls in the home-land, and stayed until his work was done or in shape, even though it was at times at the risk of his health and life—his willingness to visit every part of the work, whether occupied by missionaries or under the direction of the Chinese, and his patient endurance of the hard conditions of travel and life necessitated by such visits. His

knowledge of the work was thorough and full as to all its branches, and his plans for it far-reaching and comprehensive—especially was this true of the educational branch which he recognized at its full value of formative and directive influence not only in individual, but in national life.

“His power and reputation as a preacher was high among the Chinese and the foreign populations of China who heard him, as it was at home; and when he addressed English-understanding congregations in any of the ports he invariably drew a full house, and there as here his sermons revealed the fullness of his understanding of Christ’s Gospel. The pastor of the Union Church in Shanghai—a Britisher—remarked to him that Bishop Wilson was the greatest preacher he had ever heard, and he had heard many.”

Dr. J. C. C. Newton, who has spent his life in the Orient and is now president of the Kwansei Gakuin of Kobe, Japan, the most largely attended Southern Methodist institution of learning in the world, has kindly contributed the following upon the work and influence of Bishop Wilson upon the mission fields of the Church:

“The first time I ever saw Bishop Wilson was in 1878 at the session of the Kentucky Conference in Shelbyville.

“The second or third night of the Conference, he and Dr. O. P. Fitzgerald came into the crowded church a little late and walked into the chancel, Dr. Fitzgerald walking in front. Having never seen Dr. Wilson I did not know who it was, but was struck with his appearance because he looked exactly like a Jew. But I certainly found out who he was before the Conference adjourned. At the anniversary of the Conference Board of Missions, he addressed the large assembly. We soon discovered that a giant was treading amongst us. He put the cause of foreign missions upon higher ground, made the appeal to our conscience and pressed the universal claims of

Christ in behalf of all nations—in fact it was plain that he made not a few of us ashamed of our narrow and unworthy views. I chanced to be sitting where I could see some of the elegantly dressed women of the congregation, and it was only too evident that Dr. Wilson had touched their consciences and made them feel embarrassed over the pittance they had been giving for the conversion of the heathen—a pittance given out of their own plenteous and indulgent living. Thus it became apparent that the new Secretary of our Foreign Mission Board was going to lift the whole missionary movement of the Church in the world to higher motives and to a wider vision of Christ's redemptive work for the nations.

“During that same Conference session, Dr. Wilson preached twice, and what preaching! Some of us had never heard it in this wise before. The first sermon was based upon the parable of the importunate neighbor—the essential conditions of prayer. I had preached upon the same subject using the same text on the Sunday night previous. Well, I did not throw my own sermon away, but there was a depth and a breadth of thought that served me in good stead later.

“Bishop Pierce, easily the first pulpit orator of the Church, was the president of that Conference, but on account of some throat trouble (from which he afterwards died) was not able to preach at 11 o'clock on Sunday. Dr. Wilson took his place. His subject was 'Christ in you the hope of glory.' That sermon was one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, that I have heard. The effect upon the preachers was strangely, almost mysteriously impressive. For a good while the preacher moved quietly along getting deeper and deeper into the Person and Nature of Jesus Christ, His message and His work in believers, gripping tighter and tighter the intellect of his hearers, and so when later on he became more impassioned himself as he in his own peculiar way touched our feeling and stirred our hopes, there ensued a strange psychological condition. We were unable to respond with the usual spontaneous emotional expressions of joy and glory. Tears were re-

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pressed, the muscles of many faces were tightly drawn, hearts were almost bursting with joy, and our minds overwhelmed with the transcendent vision of the glory of Christ for us and to be realized in us.

"That sermon was the Christ of St. Paul as expounded by Alpheus W. Wilson in his unique and wonderful way.

"On the mission field, first as Missionary Secretary and then as Bishop in charge, he made a distinct and permanent contribution. Not caring so much for details, he brought large conceptions and was interested in comprehensive plans and measures. He lifted the China mission field up to a higher plane. Perhaps it is too much to say that he recreated it.

"But concerning the Southern Methodist mission in Japan, it is true that he together with the Lambuths, father and son, was one of the founders.

"Doctor, now Bishop, Walter R. Lambuth founded what has become the greatest mission college and seminary the Southern Methodist Church has ever planted in any foreign field, the Kwansei Gakuin at Kobe. This was done with the advice and approval of Bishop Wilson.

"The portraits of these two great leaders of missions hang side by side on the walls of the President's office of the Kwansei Gakuin.

"He was president and presided at the organization of the Japan Mission in August, 1886; and in later years doing what no other Bishop of our Church ever did, he visited Japan and China six times.

"As a sidelight into the Bishop's heart, I was once rather surprised to see how keenly sensitive he was respecting his relation to those far away fields and his services for them.

"On his episcopal visits to us out there, his preaching was always great, deep, uplifting and permanently beneficial. It is regrettable that some of those inimitable sermons preached out there were not taken down in shorthand and thus preserved to the Church. It is said that once he preached at the Union Church in Shanghai. A consular officer of Shanghai who had been present went

away amazed and stunned at the wonderful preaching. The Bishop being invited to preach the second time in that church, the same officer determined to go out and hear him again, but offered to bet that the second sermon could not reach to the same high level of the first. To his amazement and delight the second effort reached a still higher level of thought and power than the first. The man left the church unable to make comment. It seemed impossible to mortal man.

“Thus has passed in and out amongst us both at home and in the foreign fields a man of extraordinary thought, a powerful preacher and a man of uncommon strength of personality. That he had no limitations and handicaps could not of course be affirmed. We shall never see such a man again. A giant and a Prince in Israel has passed away, but his influence and work will abide. Personally I have been more richly blessed by his preaching than by any other of the great preachers it has been my privilege to have heard.”

The following estimates are given of his administration as Missionary Secretary and his activities in mission fields as Bishop by four of his colleagues, Bishops Hoss, Hendrix, Denny and Lambuth, whose close relation to the heart throb of the Church both at home and abroad, has peculiarly fitted them for forming judicious judgments. Bishop Lambuth, who was intimately associated with him in the foreign field, has perhaps a larger knowledge of his constructive administrative work in the Orient than any other living man.

Bishop Hoss:

“Though I was not a member of the General Conference of 1878, I was present as a visitor, and was a witness to the growing power and influence which Dr. Wilson exercised over that body. If any new Bishop had been chosen at that time he would probably have been the

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man. As it was, when a vacancy was made in the Missionary Secretaryship by the transfer of the mighty John B. McFerrin to the Book Agency, no one was much thought of for the succession except Dr. Wilson.

"To say that he was elected without the slightest effort on his part, is to speak the truth moderately and soberly. For all sorts of wire-pulling and demagogism in the Church, he had an aversion that amounted to horror. Rather than have solicited any man's vote, he would have plucked out his tongue.

"But it was not long before everybody knew that the General Conference had made a wise selection. Dr. Wilson took hold of his new position without any parade, but with an amazing vigor. The whole Church felt the thrill of his touch. He worked not by manipulation but by inspiration. To this day the great tides of interest and activity that he set in motion are still flowing. Believing in missions as he believed in Christ, to the bottom of his soul, he communicated his faith to others.

"Doubtless, there are many still alive who heard his great speech before the Holston Conference at Wytheville in 1881. It was like the movement of an army with banners. The Conference was literally electrified. Nobody went home to make thereafter an apology for taking missionary collections. In all quarters the same story was told of him. His addresses and sermons were enough to wake the dead."

Bishop Hendrix:

"Alpheus Waters Wilson was a wonderful organizer. He became known to the Church by his great missionary secretaryship. There was a time in our history when we faltered in the march, when we hesitated about going forward. The war had involved us in serious difficulties. Alpheus W. Wilson was chosen the Missionary Secretary, the great Secretary of the Foreign Board of Missions in 1878, and from that time until today a new era in our missionary life has existed.

“How delighted he was to study the field! How intensely active he was in organizing new fields! Aided by his good wife as private secretary, he often burned the midnight oil in his efforts. Six times at least he went abroad in this great mission, three times of the number around the world. A favorite visitor in great mission fields, it was his joy to organize the great mission in Japan, and it was his joy to visit all the great fields except Mexico; and his works abound, founded in great wisdom, in great scholarship with a depth of mercy.

“He inspired men with confidence. They would put into his hands sums amounting to fifteen or twenty thousand dollars and say: ‘Sir, do what you think best with that—found a school, or do what you think best.’ A friend of mine said to him in my presence: ‘Bishop, if you go to China I authorize you to draw on me for \$5,000 for such work as you deem most needed there.’ Out of that came the great Moore Memorial Church founded by a townsman of mine in Kansas City, recognized by all as the best-equipped plant for missionary work ever known in China. So in all his work he had the confidence of men; they believed in him.

“He made a great secretary of missions. The Church will never cease to honor the memory of him who laid the foundation of our great missionary work.”

Bishop Denny:

“Not since the days of Thomas Coke, the first bishop of American Methodism—indeed, the first bishop of any Church in the United States—has such a missionary spirit been given to the Methodist Church in America as was given by Bishop Alpheus Waters Wilson. The breadth of his vision, the sure ground upon which he placed the missionary enterprises of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the weight with which he laid that duty on the conscience of the Church, have never been equaled among us. From the day he was given charge of that work, there has been no backward step on the part of our Church; and indeed his influence has been broader than the Church. . .

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Since his election to the Episcopacy, he has spent much of his time in mission fields, giving personal attention to the organization and administration of our missionary interests, and many times circling the globe. Through all these years his influence at home has been a steady stream to raise yet higher the Church's appreciation of her duty to the world."

Bishop Lambuth.

"Bishop Wilson was the Secretary of the Board of Missions from 1878 to 1882. During that short time he created through his personality, his leadership and his presentation of the claims of the Gospel, a new era in the missionary history of the Church. He exhibited a strong grasp of fundamental principles underlying the Gospel, and the missionary enterprise.

"He sought to confront the conscience with God, and thereby create a sense of personal obligation to carry out that part of the scheme of redemption which is committed to man. His appeal to motive was central and primary—never secondary. That motive was sought for and found in the great missionary epistles of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

"The spirit of the great secretary was Pauline. While dwelling upon the infinite measure of Divine grace he believed profoundly in the sovereignty of God, and His right to control a man's life. He therefore with the Apostles stressed the call of God. He emphasized the spirit and attitude of the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans when he successively declared 'I am debtor. . . I am ready. . . I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.'

"The stewardship of money was not discussed in parts, but as a great whole. He did not withhold his own slender resources. He was in the campaign without reservation. All he had was on the altar, and in this act of sacrificial service he had the sympathy and co-operation of his family.

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"In his dealing with missionaries Dr. Wilson was generous in his provision for the needs of their work, and, especially, for their preparation and equipment that they might render the most intelligent and efficient service possible. In this he was far ahead of his generation for he moved in those early days in line with the most approved and advanced modern policies in the setting up of a mission whether it involved the building of churches, the establishment of educational work or the equipment of hospitals. Here was no timidity, no hesitation, no withholding of what was essential to the success of the largest plans for the extension of the Kingdom. He planned and worked with a master hand, and his strokes were strong, bold, and true.

THE MISSIONARY BISHOP.

"Upon the election of Dr. A. W. Wilson in 1882 to the Episcopacy he was assigned to work abroad and plunged at once into the world field. As a traveler he did not spare himself any more than he did in the office. Six times the Oriental fields were visited, and the Latin American fields repeatedly. These were not superficial and hurried attempts at administrative work, but time enough was given to deliberate and profound study of missionary problems. He held tenaciously to his convictions but withal was open-minded, and reserved the right to adjust his thinking to new conditions.

"In all the constant travel, and much of it was hard and trying to a man of his age, I have never heard him utter a complaint, nor did he count it a hardship to prosecute these long journeys and to encounter untoward conditions including more than one severe epidemic of Asiatic cholera in China and Japan, and the plague in India. These things were incidental and were accepted as a matter of course. They did not turn him aside, nor did they cause a moment's hesitation in going to meet his engagements in these distant fields.

Bishop Wilson was always ready to preach. I have never known him to refuse. He presented a great Gospel in preaching to small groups of missionaries or to larger

native gatherings through an interpreter. He gave the best that was in him, and that best opened up a depth in the Scriptures that became a well-spring of perennial life and power to the missionary and to the native preacher. His inspiration was not from crowds. It came from within. In dealing with the missionaries he believed that 'man grows with the greatness of his purpose.' As God reveals Himself to man, man grows. He grows with his apprehension of truth, his enlargement of sympathy, his deepening motive, and in his ever-exalted faith and growing purpose. The Bishop also held that the missionary must grow with his convert, with his group of believers, with the native Church, and what should be to him, the very enlarging conception of the redemptive purpose and plan.

"As a missionary master workman himself he ever fell back upon Christ as the great personal dynamic. He preached an imperial Christ—one in whom all faith must be centered. He taught that all work must be related to His work, and all life vitalized by His life. He insisted that an imperial Christ must be represented by a gospel which lays its claims upon every man, upon all of man, and upon all mankind.

"During his administration Bishop Wilson, accompanied by Dr. Collins Denny, was present in Kobe, and presided over the meeting in the summer of 1886 which opened the Japan Mission. *He heartily favored the evangelistic policies* of that Mission and gave his influence to the establishment of the Hiroshima Girls' School, which has grown to be one of the greatest Christian institutions for young women in the Empire. He also approved of the founding of the Kwansei Gakuin, our college for young men, which, starting in his day as a night school, has grown to an enrollment in all departments of over 1200 splendid young men and boys. It was to this institution in 1889 that he agreed to apply \$10,000 for land and buildings a part of the special contribution of Mr. Thomas Branch of Richmond, Va.

"In China, the Bishop organized the China Mission Annual Conference in 1886, threw the strength of his in-

fluence into Buffington Institute at Suchow, and later on favored the larger plans of Dr. Young J. Allen and others in the establishment of the Anglo-Chinese College in Shanghai, the McTyeire Institute for Girls, and later on the Suchow University. More might be said but these lines of policy and of effort serve to indicate the masterful grasp of the great basic elements which lie at the heart of the missionary enterprise. It was to him, as to the Apostle Paul, a world enterprise, and one worthy of all that was potential and actual in a man's life. The constraining motive throughout, did not lie in a propaganda nor in denominational exploitation. While there was no relaxing of his hold upon the ideals and the doctrines which were a part of his own beloved Church, this great missionary Bishop stood for what was deeper and broader—the truth of the Fatherhood of God revealed in and through Jesus Christ; and what was the central motive of all, the persistent love, the sacrificial death, and the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the only hope of Glory, and the only hope of the world.”



BISHOP WILSON'S STUDY
After he sent his books to Emory University in 1915

CHAPTER VII.

THE EPISCOPACY AND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

The General Conference of 1882, which met in Nashville, at the close of the quadrennium of Dr. Wilson as Missionary Secretary, in recognition of his prophetic vision and matchless leadership, elected him bishop on the first ballot. He was the only bishop elected on that ballot. Those who were present say that when the result of the ballot was announced there was no change in his countenance and no one could have told from his outward demeanor that he was conscious that his life was to be so greatly affected by it. It was the grave responsibility rather than the honor that impressed him. He felt that a new burden had been placed upon him, which he could not shirk, as duty to him had a sacred meaning. In this field of largest opportunities and responsibilities he gave thirty-four years of service to the Church and to Christianity at large, the value of which defies all attempts of human measurement. Sixteen years of the thirty-four he was Senior Bishop and presided over the meetings of the College of Bishops.

Bishop Hoss has characterized the long and distinguished services of A. W. Wilson as a member of the Episcopacy in this manner:

“At the General Conference of 1882, Dr. Wilson was elected Bishop on the first ballot. Though he had sought the office in no way, he accepted it as coming in the providential order, and held it with great distinction for thirty-four years. His work as a bishop in every part

of the world was never less than distinguished. Whether as a presiding officer in the Conference, or as a preacher in the pulpit, or as a leader and guide in the deliberations of the Cabinet, he ranked easily with the men of renown. No man can write the history of the Church and leave him out. There was no one of his colleagues with whom it is easy to compare him. But I certainly do not go amiss when I say that he was the equal of William McKendree or of Henry B. Bascon, or of George F. Pierce, or of Holland N. McTyeire, or of Enoch M. Marvin. Though differing from each of them in certain respects, he was entirely worthy to be mentioned in the same class with them all. His older brethren used to speak of him as 'Websterian.' Strangely enough some persons have characterized him as lacking imagination. In very truth, his imagination was as glorious as a tropical forest. It blazed at times like the sun descending through a sky that was full of rifted clouds. Though scarcely anybody ever thought of him as a rhetorician, yet he marshalled his words with a masterly skill and ease. I have heard him when it seemed that he would inevitably tangle and involve himself in his thick rushing torrent of speech. But he never did. Just when he appeared to be on the point of confusion, he was sure to light upon the right word and ride out in triumph.

"I have followed his tracks through many countries. Always it was easy to see he had been there, and left an impression. Especially, however, did he do a mighty work in the Orient. Time will not obliterate the influence which he exerted upon the infant Churches of Japan, Korea, and China, and no doubt it will appear 'in that day' when 'the books are opened' by Him who sits upon the throne.

"During all his later years he was Senior Bishop of the Church, and discharged the duties of that position with singular effectiveness. In the course of time, his judgments of law and usage came to be accepted almost without hesitation by his colleagues and brethren, and the admiration with which they had always looked up to him

deepened into an almost fathomless love. He was not in the least autocratic nor self-assertive. While he generally spoke as one who knew, he was modest before all men.

"He represented his Church in four Ecumenical Conferences, and never failed to attract the attention and command the respect of those bodies. For many years he was also a member of the Joint Commission on Federation, and no one of the Commissioners was listened to more eagerly than he. The men of the North and of the South alike looked up to him as a veritable Captain of the Lord's hosts. At the close of the Chattanooga sitting in 1912 Bishop Cranston and all his colleagues rose to their feet and pressed around him with eager interest as he made his closing speech, which sounded as if one of the old prophets had come back to earth with a message from God.

"When he was superannuated at the age of eighty years, I took occasion to say: 'My brethren, I fear that you have made a mistake. It would have been better in my judgment, to have retired three or four of the rest of us, and have left him in place. The vacancy in the College of Bishops would not then have been so great.' That was my opinion then, and has been my opinion ever since. Long, long will it be before another man arises fit to be matched with him in intellectual vigor, or in the depth of spiritual experience. Blessed be God for having bestowed so great a gift upon the Church. He sits now in the heavenly places of Christ, and meditates on the great theme which he so long preached."

Bishop Denny has thus spoken of his aged colleague, whom he loved as a father:

"No one in the Church was surprised when at the close of his quadrennium as Missionary Secretary the General Conference of 1882 elected him to the Episcopacy, the only man on the first ballot. For more than thirty-four years he filled with power the chief office in the Church. More than any of our Bishops since Coke he was sent across the seas, and the Church had come to look upon him as our

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chief missionary bishop. His labors at home were no less constant, and throughout our borders and beyond he did his work, everywhere commanding the confidence and love of the people. Perhaps no man can meet the delicate and heavy responsibilities of the Episcopacy without mistakes. Bishop Wilson was a man who gave large trust to those in whose character and piety he believed. At times he trusted some of these men with work they were not qualified to do. No man ever suffered at his hands. He was a model of firmness, yet careful of the feelings of his brethren. He was detached as are few men. His likes and dislikes did not seem to enter into his work. He knew the history and law of Methodism, and he passionately yet sanely loved the Church. Keen of insight, knowing men and measures, grasping with his giant mind the tendencies of the times, knowing that the work of God must be done, can be done only by the Spirit of God working the redemptive powers of the cross of Christ in the hearts of men, he went his patient and courageous way, without reliance on the temporal and vanishing powers of this present world. He believed his Lord was equal to every demand of time and eternity, and that out of the dark chaos of this present day the Church of God would stand forth with the light of her Lord on her face and the song of his salvation breaking from her lips. We thank God for Bishop Wilson's long, devoted, and honored Episcopacy."

He interpreted the voice of the Church as the voice of God, and never did he flinch in the face of responsibility. Once when he was presiding over a Conference, one of the candidates for admission into full connection objected to answering the questions concerning Christian perfection, on the ground that he was already perfect. The Bishop told him that he did not believe him and that thousands of better men than he—all the generations of Methodist preachers—had answered them, and that he would

not put the vote on his admission until the Conference had expressed its mind. In a few minutes the Conference made known its view of the case in unmistakable terms.

"When the candidate found that he was not taken at his own estimate of himself and was likely to be left out," said the Bishop in speaking of the incident, "he began to shuffle and tried evasion until at the suggestion of one of the preachers, I repeated the questions and insisted upon a direct answer. Then he surrendered and the Conference laughed and let him in."

On one occasion he performed an official duty from which most men would have shrunk.

"Did you not feel it unpleasant?" he was asked after it had been done.

"Yes, as a man," he replied, "but as an officer of the Church, I did not let myself have any feeling about it."

During the thirty-four years he was Bishop, he saw the membership of the Church grow from 860,687 to 2,154,307, the membership of the Sunday School increase from 524,763 to 1,924,698, the missionary offerings for the extension of Christ's Kingdom at home and abroad advance from \$581,222 to \$1,749,283 and marvelous development made in the mission fields. The Woman's Missionary work which had its genesis in a society at Trinity Church, Baltimore, and which has been referred to in another chapter, has become of surpassing magnitude, enlisting the intelligent and consecrated leadership of the women of our Church. It was in its infancy at the meeting of the General Conference which elected

him bishop, having been recognized for the first time by the preceding General Conference, but it had made such progress during the quadrennium as to call forth this paragraph by the Bishops in their Episcopal address.

“A new chapter is to be written in this connection. That timely auxiliary, the Woman’s Missionary Society, correlated by the General Conference four years ago, has done well, and justified the recognition then made. So far as results have appeared, its affairs have been managed efficiently, economically, and judiciously. The management has adhered to the line of collection and disbursement prescribed by law, and instead of lessening the amount flowing by ordinary channels into the treasury of the Missionary Board, it is our opinion that the money reported by the Woman’s Missionary Society is a clear gain. By their excellent monthly paper useful information has been circulated, and by their personal efforts the zeal for Missions has been generally quickened. The Society has sent out five well-chosen missionaries—two to China, one to Brazil, and two to the Mexican Border Mission—who co-operate with the Board of Missions harmoniously in their respective fields as teachers. The Society is also building at Laredo, an important station on the Rio Grande, a boarding-school for girls, and its agents are occupying two such school-buildings, erected by its own funds, in China. Ground has been secured, and plans made for a girls’ boarding-school in Piracicaba, Brazil. Money raised to date \$64,910. Their *Missionary Advocate* has paid its own expenses, and brought \$1,000 into the Society’s treasury. We are advised that a memorial will be sent up requesting certain readjustments of the Society to the Board of Missions, and to its own recognized field of operations. It is needless that we recommend it to your most cordial and prompt consideration.”

The women raised for their work in 1916 \$594,039. Southern Methodist has profound cause for gratitude to Almighty God for its noble womanhood.

He saw the educational institutions of the Church increase from 73, which reported \$2,389,000 worth of property and endowments aggregating \$978,000 to 140 universities, colleges and academies, classified on a scientific basis and controlled by the Church, with \$16,091,809 worth of property and endowments aggregating \$9,160,467. Though the Vanderbilt University was lost to the Church during that period, the result was the founding of two other great universities, Emory at Atlanta, Ga., and the Southern Methodist University at Dallas, Texas, which promise to exert a tremendous influence in shaping the civilization of the South according to the highest standards and in promoting the best interests of the Kingdom of God.

He saw the Publishing House grow from an institution seriously crippled by debt into a great agency for the publication and distribution of religious literature with sales exceeding \$1,000,000 annually and branches in Dallas, Texas, Richmond, Virginia, and Shanghai, China.

He saw the Church Extension, the Epworth League, the Deaconess and the Laymen's Missionary Movements spring into being in response to the needs of the Church. The growth of the Church Extension work under the administration of the present Secretary has been little short of phenomenal, and has created an epoch in this phase of the Church's activity. Among other noteworthy achievements

its General Loan Fund has gone beyond the million dollar mark.

He saw better provision made for the support of the Church's claimants and the efficiency of Church organizations improved by a change of their policies to meet new conditions.

He saw the growing fraternal relations of the two great Episcopal Methodisms result in the adoption of a common hymnal. These are some of the things done by the Church during his bishopric. All in all, the progress of the Church, it has been said, is without a parallel in the history of religious institutions. The Bishop could have well looked back over that period and exclaimed, "What hath God wrought!" But he had no lust for numbers or desire to make a showing that would commend itself to the world. He had the conviction that, as the Church is spiritual in character, the further it is removed from worldly motives, standards and ambitions the more progress it will make. He thought of the Church as dwelling in an atmosphere far above that of principalities and powers—an atmosphere created by the very presence of Jehovah. He was never unduly elated over the Church's prosperity but felt that after we had done all that was commanded us we were unprofitable servants. In some respects he was not unlike Joshua Soule, especially in his unalterable opposition to such innovations which he regarded as likely to be hurtful to our Zion.

A volume of no small proportions could and probably will be written covering that long period when Alpheus W. Wilson was a dominant force in the Episcopacy, embracing his administrative work, his

interpretations of law, his constructive policies in mission fields, his matchless preaching, and his magnificent leadership, but the spirit of these things has become a part of something more durable than books—the very character and constitution of the Church.

This modest volume simply touches a few of the high places in his official life and leaves the rest to a future biographer.

Before he was elected Bishop he was a member of the General Conferences of 1870, 1874, 1878, and 1882. It was not long after his election to the Episcopacy that our mission fields were placed under his special supervision, in addition to his duties in the home land. In 1886, 1888, 1890, 1898, 1900 and 1907 he made official visits to our missions in the Orient; in 1892 and 1902 his Episcopal duties led him to Brazil. He was president of the Board of Missions from 1900 to 1914. He represented our Church in the organization of the Methodist Church in Japan, and his views were accorded great weight by his colleagues. He was fraternal delegate to the British Wesleyan Conference in London in 1912—the last delegate from our Church to that body. He was a member of the Ecumenical Conferences of 1881 and 1901 held at London, and of those of 1891 and 1911 held at Washington and Toronto respectively. He was a member of the Federal Council and of the Commission on Unification from our Church, and had been appointed to preach the sermon on the occasion of the meeting of the Joint Commission in December 1916 in Baltimore.

At the General Conference in Birmingham in 1906, there was a strong movement in favor of the re-statement of the Articles of Religion. After the question had been thoroughly discussed, in view of its importance, the Conference requested the Bishops to give their opinions on the subject. Bishop Wilson, Candler, Hoss, Hendrix and Galloway addressed the Conference. Bishop Wilson's speech on that occasion, entirely impromptu, has been considered by some of his friends to have been one of his most notable utterances. At its conclusion the Conference arose and sung "How Firm a Foundation." It is more than probable that if a vote had been taken immediately after this speech that the re-statement report would have been lost, but its supporters wisely arranged for a postponement of the vote for several days when the report was adopted. The College of Bishops against the protest of Bishop Wilson made him Chairman of the Commission on the Ecumenical Statement of Methodist Doctrine which selection was approved by a rising vote of the Conference. As is well known the whole movement ultimately came to naught.

The report on re-statement, as it passed the Conference, and the speech of Bishop Wilson are of sufficient interest in connection with his life to be reprinted in this chapter.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE NEW STATEMENT OF METHODIST FAITH AND DOCTRINE.
REPORT No. 1.

"Your committee, to whom was referred the resolution on the need at this time of a new statement of Methodist faith and doctrine, desire to report that they have

given the resolution careful consideration, and believe it is wise to take such action as is proposed in the resolution. The resolution reads as follows:

“‘Believing that the different branches of world-wide Methodism that are represented in the Ecumenical Methodist Conference can and should unite in the preparation of such a statement of our common faith as is needed, and believing that this General Conference should take such steps as may be necessary to secure in the early future the co-operation of other representative Methodist Churches in the preparation of a new statement of our faith, we therefore offer the following resolution:

“‘*Resolved*, That the College of Bishops be requested to appoint a commission of five members, one of whom shall be a bishop, who shall be members of the next Ecumenical Conference, this commission to invite other branches of Methodism to unite with us in the preparation of our doctrinal system as it is called for in our day, and this commission shall represent our Church in the preparation of the same.’

“We recommend the passage of the resolution herein proposed, with the understanding that the preparation of this new statement of doctrine shall be undertaken by the commission only when such co-operation on the part of the other representative branches of Methodism shall have been secured as shall give to the statement prepared an ecumenical character and make it an expression of the faith of world-wide Methodism. This commission shall report back to this General Conference, four years hence, the result of their labors. We further recommend that the Publishing Agents be authorized to meet whatever expenses may be incurred by the commission in the discharge of their duties.

“W F. TILLET,

“W R. LAMBUTH,

“C. W. CARTER.”

The speech is printed as it appeared in *The Daily Christian Advocate* of the Conference.

“Bishop Wilson: I am at a very great disadvantage. I had no idea of entering into this discussion at all, and it is not a matter to be enterprised or taken in hand unadvisedly or suddenly. It requires some thought, and I do not want to express myself carelessly or indefinitely or vaguely, so I can only speak very briefly and with reference to but one or two points that I have heard stated in the speech of Dr. Tillett. I did not hear the paper read, and I am somewhat at a loss on that account. In the first place, I want it distinctly understood, whatever changes may go on in the world, or in the Church, I stand by this fundamental thing—Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and forever. And the thing that expresses him most satisfactorily and clearly to the conscience, I will say, using an apostolic form of speech, of the people is the thing that is most likely to endure throughout the generations. There are a good many things that are shaken. Our polity will change, our very speech will change, and our forms of life will change. Two or three generations hence our Methodists, just as true as ourselves to the fundamental faith, will take very different views of the application of great spiritual facts to the conditions and facts of our lives. But there are some things that do not change, and never will change, and the statement of them for the most part is made in terms so simple that they cannot be misunderstood; and they are so broad at the same time and, as I think, adequate that it will be very difficult for any man to add anything to them. I do not agree with Dr. Tillett as to the inadequacy of our Twenty-five Articles of Religion. There are two or three of the Articles which perhaps, if they were to be written over again, I might put in other form. He might have gone further back than Archbishop Cranmer if he had sought for the sources of them. Archbishop Cranmer copied almost literally what he had found in the old Latin Fathers and in the Greek Fathers before them, and these terms of our faith can be traced back almost to apostolic times. We are not getting up new things, we have hold of the expression and utterance of the

faith of the Church as they have come down to us through the ages. There is very little exception to be made to this statement. The first of our Articles of faith deals with the fundamentals of Christianity and as to these things they state nothing new, that had not been held by the Church through the centuries before. What he named as the anti-Romish Articles were the statements of our Protestant faith; not as new things at all, though they might have been set in controversial form, but they were the statements of things our Protestant fathers believed, and they sustained their belief by the proof; and these things were held in the apostolic times and by the sub-apostolic fathers. There is not a new thing in our Articles of faith, and they all cluster about the one central figure, you cannot separate a single one from him, unless it be, if you want to look at it in the secular light, our article in relation to citizenship and the country we belong to; and we get our authority for that direct from him. Even to us through the ages, there is very little want to look at it in the secular light, or vary its form from our form of faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I rather pity the man who cannot find the materials of our faith in those twenty-five articles. (Applause.) I think if I should undertake a course of lectures on them it would require an exhaustion of even almost those terms that Dr. Tillett required to be stated for the first time as distinctively "Wesleyan."

"J. J. Tigert: Dr. Summers wrote over a thousand octavo pages on them.

"Bishop Wilson: You can go to Summers' book if you want to find out about them. It is true for the most part, our people, the great body of Christians, are not dependent upon these Articles of Faith as written out and handed down to us. Their religion does not depend upon them. They get religion in the first instance—that is, they are converted and filled with the Holy Ghost, but their faith, if you come to examine it, you will find conforms to these Articles of Faith, even if they have never read them. They are the normal outcome of our spiritual experience, and have been always there. The Church did

not formulate Articles of Faith first, and then proceed to shape its Christian experience upon the ground and after the model of those Articles of Faith. It was a very simple faith in the beginning. They believed in Jesus Christ our Lord, and as the inevitable outcome of that they began to broaden in their views of him and put him in his true place in relation to thought and life and everything, and by and by these found expression in the terms of faith as we have them, the manifold creeds, and we cannot get rid of them, and never will until we get rid of that which is fundamental and lies below the whole of our spiritual experience. The rock on which we build is not a creed and not a literal statement of any fact, or anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The rock on which we build is the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is in us by the spirit of the living God; and the Church and Wesleyanism has revived it in the Church more perhaps than any other ecclesiastical system—the Church has built upon that from the beginning. It has not pretended to have any other foundation than Jesus Christ, and it is simply in all its Articles the faith of the heart giving expression to these convictions which have necessarily and normally resulted from their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God—a faith wrought within them by the spirit of God; and we cannot get away from those elements of our life. Now, I am perfectly satisfied myself with the Articles as we have them. I think they will satisfy the faith of the world for many generations to come; but there is just one thing I am a little afraid of. This is not the time to be making changes in the old, venerable, the solid, the established statements of our faith which we have had throughout the centuries and which have satisfied the broadest and best of the minds of our fathers. We have not done with higher criticism. Wait until it reaches its conclusions. (Applause.) We have not done with the assaults, the needless assaults, of science upon our faith. Wait until these things are settled. When you get the last and best conclusion of these investigations into the Scriptures of God and their relations to our common life, when you have settled the points of agreements and difference between us and the

men who are holding out the materialism of the world as its best and highest thing—when you have all these matters settled, you can come then to fix upon some statement in advance of anything you have, and that will perhaps move and satisfy the heart and conscience of the Church, but you make your changes now while the air is full of discord and the notes of dissonance are jarring upon our ears from day to day, many of our young men going into our theological schools do not know exactly where they stand.

“Bishop Hoss: And don’t know when they come out, either.

“Bishop Wilson: Yes, and do not know when they come out—and I will venture to affirm you cannot phrase an Article of Faith to-day that will satisfy the mind of the great body of theological students as they come out from our theological schools. The time has not come for it yet brethren. Let us stand where we are until we can see through the mists a little more clearly and the darkness shall be dissipated and out of the clearer heaven shall come to us the only thing that can settle our faith and satisfy our consciences, the revelation of the Son of God to the heart of the whole Church. Then may we be able to state a little more definitely and accurately, perhaps, what we have in our present form of statement.

“I am a little afraid of putting these spiritual experiences into the frigid forms of a creed, and things that we have stated creedally. Paul would not do it. ‘We have no dominion over your faith,’ he wrote to the Corinthians, ‘we are helpers of your joy.’ The form of spiritual experience varies with the characteristics of the man, and you cannot put any statement of it in such shape as that it will meet the requirements of all who have or profess to have faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. We had rather a sad instance of it—it is true it comes from outside and the reference may be criticised on that ground—but we had a sad instance of the utter hopelessness of any such attempt in Mr. James’s ‘Varieties of Christian Experience.’ But if you undertake to put your Christian experience in frigid form, in letters graven in stone instead of being

written in the heart you will inevitably offend some of God's choicest ones. You will come athwart some of the finest and subtlest experiences of our spiritual life. You will make many wonder if they have ever known Jesus Christ. You will start doubt and bring disaster where now there is the satisfaction of assured faith. I do not want anything of that kind; and when we touch that side of things, I would rather leave that to go out in God's Spirit than put it down in bald letters on paper and print it out for the criticism of the critical ones of our theological schools. Don't let us do it, brethren.

"There is only one point on which I might find agreement with Dr. Tillett's statement. I have no objection to the Commission that shall take Wesley's fifty-two sermons and his Expository Notes and glean out of them the essential things and shape up what are standards of doctrine, not the Articles of Faith, if you please. We have never regarded ourselves as bound by everything that is written in the fifty-two sermons, but they contain the essence of our faith, and are the things about which men can preach. We can preach them a great deal easier than we can put them in creedal form. We want that understood. A man may preach about a great many things, and every man will have his own way of preaching them. You don't preach them as I do. (Laughter.) And my brethren of the College of Bishops don't preach them as I do. We have the same fundamental truths and the fundamental experience, but it shapes out in manifold form. Sometimes it glows like the glory of the sunset, sometimes the very heavens are opened and the crystal clearness of the throne is before us. Sometimes it is a mere glimmer of the light along the darkness of a shaded valley; sometimes it comes in splendid landscape form; sometimes it is a mere oasis in the desert—it doesn't matter when or how it comes, the same fact is at the bottom of it, that the Spirit of God is working there, and we want every man to tell just what he knows about it. If he doesn't know anything about it, don't let him preach—in God's name don't let him preach. If he knows anything, let him tell it in his own way. He will not tell



1. House on Charles Circuit, where Bishop Wilson boarded during the first year of his ministry
2. Bishop and Mrs. Wilson at McTyeire Home, Shanghai, China (1901)

it in my way, or in your way, but in the way God intended him to tell it.

“Touch the Ark of God lightly, brethren. It may get to be obsolete sometime. The old Tabernacle is laid away, and the Ark is lost; but while we have it, don’t put profane hands upon it. It holds within its covers sacred things. A higher law and testimony than Moses ever gave, a more fruitful branch than ever Aaron offered to be laid away, and we cannot afford to let those things perish lightly. Holy everything that touches the inner experience of man as among the sanctities of life, only to be laid bare in the presence of Him who searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men. (Great applause.)”

At the Birmingham General Conference the Bishops presented to Bishop Wilson a written request, signed by all of them, for him to preach the sermon at the ordination of the new Bishops. Though he made the point that it was not his turn, he finally yielded to the persuasions of his colleagues. At the Asheville General Conference, four years later, the same honor was thrust upon him, making three times he had preached the ordination sermon, something unprecedented in Southern Methodism. This is one of the many evidences of the high estimate that was placed upon his preaching ability by his fellows in the College of Bishops.

He was retired from active service by the General Conference at Oklahoma City in 1914, at the advanced age of eighty, but his counsel and services were eagerly sought by his colleagues and other brethren to the time of his death. His sermons, speeches and presence exerted a commanding influence wherever he went. The people were only too willing to listen to and be influenced by a man

who had placed his great talents at the disposal of the Church all the years of his life.

Respecting his retirement he wrote to his daughter that he was satisfied; that he had always brought everything that concerned his life to the Lord, and had left it with Him. This was no exception and the retirement seemed to be His ordering. He accepted it as coming from His hand. Furthermore, he wrote of the kindness and generosity with which the Church had uniformly treated him and expressed himself as not having deserved such consideration.

His farewell address to the General Conference is ranked among Methodist classics. When the hour for the adjournment had come, Bishop Hendrix called upon Bishop Wilson, who spoke as follows:

“It is my last message, brethren, and it is perhaps appropriate, and you will not blame me, at least, if I indulge in a few personal reflections. It is something more than sixty-two years now since I began my ministry. I preached my first sermon on the 28th of March, 1852. It is a long time as I look back upon it. Almost two generations have passed away. The men whom I knew as leaders in the Church and men who made Methodism what it is are all gone to their reward. Sometimes I feel as if I had fallen into an entirely different sphere of being. The changes have been great. You perhaps have not noted them as carefully and minutely as those of us who have come to be watchful of the drift and movement of things. Through it all I have tried, first of all, to maintain the character of a Methodist preacher, than which there is none higher on earth. I have sought to preach the gospel, only the gospel. I have not cared for side issues that have been raised. I have paid but little attention to the opposition of the world. I have drawn my lessons and my inspiration from the Word of God, and from that only. I dare to say that I have not suffered the manifold vagaries

of the neophytes of our time, of various eccentric writers, to influence me to any extent. I have not been unmindful of them as perils to the Church or dangers to which we were seriously exposed, but I have never feared for the issue and never doubted for a moment that the final result would be the triumph, the glorious triumph, of the kingdom of God, and especially of that kingdom of God as it has been manifested in our own much-blessed Church.

“When I look at our own Church and its history I am surprised, and yet I can say that my personal history has some sort of comparison with it. In my earlier days I had to go through great difficulties—was often worn and weary, broken in health, and in the midst of conditions that threatened my very life. Yet I staggered on and stumbled and again arose and went the way the old fathers went, and, I may say it frankly and honestly, without fear. I have gone through every experience of the Methodist preacher from the top to the bottom, as a preacher on the circuit and then to the station and to the presiding elder’s district, until you put me where I have had the heaviest burden of my life. Nobody can know what I have had to bear in the last sixteen years. Thank God that I have come through it all so surely, peacefully, and without any disturbance of my faith and without any loss to the Church!

“Our Church had to go through the calamity of the war broken, and when the war ceased there seemed but little prospect of its survival. Every force in the land was against it; and yet it gathered itself up in the strength of its great Leader and Head, determined to pursue its course unflinchingly in spite of appearances and evil conditions. And it grew steadily until in its course it outstripped every form of Methodism in its gain, its conquests over sin and the world, on the continent. It was a surprise to me, I confess, that at the Ecumenical Conference at Toronto, when the reports of the gains of Methodism on the continent in all its branches were spread out, it was seen that our own Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had made more than half of all the gains that the Church had made. We may well congratulate ourselves upon such reward of

ALPHEUS W. WILSON

fidelity to the Church and to God. Only God could have brought us through with such measures of gain. I thank God for it all.

"I am perfectly content with what you have done. I lay down the burden that you laid upon me with a sense of relief that no man can know. I would gladly have labored on had you said so. I might have done something more; but God has willed it otherwise, and it has been my course all the way through to leave everything in the hands of God. And I am sure that it is His will that I should be where you have said that I must remain. I thank you for all the courtesy and kindness that you have shown me through all these years. I have dealt with you, in the Annual Conferences and here, with perfect fairness and honesty. I can say before my God that I have suffered no partiality or prejudice or personal consideration to influence at any point or to any extent my administration anywhere. I have always, at all times, laid all matters concerning the Church and myself before God and left it to him to decide the issue. I am grateful for what has come out of it all.

"The world is just opening up before you. You have no conception of what is coming within the next few years. One who reads the signs of the times and carefully considers the movements of all the forces in earth can hardly fail to see that we are going to meet the most tremendous issues that have ever confronted the Church, and that within a very short time. Look at the vast combinations on one side and the other. The Churches are getting together, consolidating their forces, determining the issues of all their joint work. The combinations on the other side, the secular forces, are being made with a rapidity and a power that none of the legislative influences of earth can control. And they are bound to clash. That clash has begun, in fact, and it will become more intense and widespread as the years go on. And they will compass about the camp of the saints, I have no doubt, by and by, and we shall find it necessary to rely not upon our organization and not upon our wise legislation, but simply and solely upon the presence and power of the Spirit of God and upon the

living Word of God as He shall direct its use. You may depend upon that.

"We have come to think a little too much, I fear, at times, of our elaborate organizations. We have many of them. There is hardly a department of the Church and ministry and religious life that we have not tried to put into some form of machinery, and oftentimes the machine is so perfect that the man is lost sight of. Such perfect machinery must produce results, but of what sort? We may gain on one side, and by neglect of things that make up the realities of life we may lose on the other. We must be very careful, brethren, and not let our notions of the methods and the means employed set aside our views of what the means were intended for and the methods ought to lead to. We must be careful about that. Our business, first of all, is to save men. Remember that. I do not care how perfect your order is. There are magnificent organizations in this country. In the Churches, too, there are organizations so perfect, so well planned, so thoroughly equipped with everything that seems needful to the accomplishment of their ends that the world itself looks upon them admiringly and wonderingly; yet, after all, they do not reach down after the masses of the people and save them. They are dying still, growing more degraded still, sinking lower still. The pressure is upon them as hard as ever. And the more largely these great combinations continue to grow, the less hope there is for the lesser and feebler and weaker men. Take care of them. Your Heavenly Father, who looks after the sparrow that falls, looks after the least of them, and your neglect of them and disregard of them while you are furbishing up your weapons and perfecting your machinery will bring upon you a curse instead of a blessing.

"Be careful, I say. First of all, save men. Save them. Do not let them die, whatever may become of your various plans and schemes of every sort. I don't condemn them, but be careful that they do not supersede the great purpose for which the whole Church was set up on earth. The Church of the living God, which He purchased with His own blood, was intended to be simply the channel

through which the mighty forces of His love and truth and power should come down upon men for their salvation. The old Church of the catacombs, the Church of the martyrs, the Church of the confessors—that was the Church of power. They had none of your associations and none of your organizations. The one association that they had was the Church, the Church of God, alive, alert, ready to act, ready to die for Him who died for it. And that is what we want to-day. We want a Church that will stand in the face of all the world and say: ‘You may destroy every building we have, you may tear down all our defences, you may put away from the midst of us everything that we count precious and dear to us; but you cannot take our gospel and our Christ and our God from us, and in the name and by the power that is His, and by this only, we will conquer. We will die in conquering if need be, but we will conquer at the last.’ I want you to go to your homes with this conviction in your hearts. Build up all the waste places. Do the best you can with your organizations for every class of men. But don’t lose your interest in the gospel, your personal right to save men. You laymen, God has called you, as much as He has called the preachers of the gospel, to administer to men in the highest and holiest things, to save them. You cannot talk with a man on the street, in your business, in your homes socially without influencing him one way or the other. You make an impression, good or evil. You help him toward God or the other way. Be careful, I say. Let your light shine so that all men may see it. And wherever you are and whatever you are doing, in your business, in your courts, in your legislative halls, in your social assemblies—whatever you are doing, let Christ be first and foremost in your thought and purpose. It is He that has laid His hand upon you to save you and through you to save those about you and those far off. Take care that you live up to the demand of God.

“I am very grateful to you. I can never express the debt I owe to the Church. It has guarded me. It has cared for me. While I have labored for it and suffered for it, it has been tender in its dealings with me. It has made me

feel as though it regarded me as some precious thing. I want you to have that same care for my brethren who fall into the same line of work behind me. I love them. I shall miss their fellowship. We have been one in heart. We have had strong divisions sometimes; but we have never lost the heart of love for each other, and, through God's grace, we never will. We may differ as widely hereafter. But we are striving together for the faith of the gospel, for the upbuilding of the Church of God, for the redemption of the world; and we are one in the great purpose of God, and we intend to remain one. It will be so as long as I live, and I pray God that the time may never come when we shall have an Episcopacy that is divided in heart. I do not care what their differences of opinion may be, and I do not care how plainly they speak them out. But one in heart they must be, or the Church will be divided. Remember that. Pray for these men. They need your prayers. Honor them. You have put them in their high position. Don't distrust them and treat them as though they required to be fettered all the time. Give them all the freedom that the high place in which you have put them requires. Let them do the work that belongs to their place, with their eye upon God and their hands in God's hand. And so may they be blessed in their personal experience, in their work, and in the results of their work among you and in all lands.

"Methodism is world-wide to-day—more than world-wide; it has reached up to the throne. The principalities and powers in heavenly places learn the manifold wisdom of God through it as much as through any other Church in all the earth. It is a great thing. See that you keep it great. Don't belittle it. Don't speak slightly of your church. It may be a homely church in a lonely situation. It may be out in the woods. It may be a log cabin. But it is the church of the living God, no matter where you find it. And it is worthy of your uttermost thought and care and ought to be treated with all reverence and regarded as sacred because it is God's. God's hand is upon it. Care for it. Lift it up. Make it honorable among men by its purity and the integrity of your life and your fidelity

to your high profession. And may the blessing of Almighty God rest upon the entire Church in all its parts, in all places, until the day shall come when He shall assemble us all before Himself and speak to us one by one! He will then take us up separately, brethren, for every one of us shall give an account of himself. And He will say to each one: "Well done, well done, good and faithful servant." I would rather hear that voice from His lips than hear the choir of angels sing the loftiest song that ever pealed through the skies of heaven. Just to hear that voice, "Well done!" May God keep you and guide you and guard you! A word of prayer:

"O Father, great God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Maker and Ruler of all things, who hast given Thy Son to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, do thou mercifully look upon these Thy servants. They have labored here from day to day in their effort to find the right thing for Thy Church to do and to make the right plans upon which the Church shall operate in its conflicts with sin and the world. Let them go from here with the consciousness that Thou dost approve their work. If they have done any wrong, pardon them. If they have mistaken the end, forgive their error. Let it be that Thy hand shall turn to good all the evil, if there be any, among all their doings. And may the work be wrought with such vigilance and care in years to come as that in the ages to come God's exceeding kindness toward us through Christ Jesus shall be clearly seen! Bless us in our homes. Make our families Christlike. Fill them all with the Spirit. Let our children grow up in the faith of their fathers, the faith of the apostles. Let them grow up into the likeness of the Son of God. And may the generations coming on be better than this, purer, truer, more devoted! May we not lose any element of power that has been handed down to us from the generations behind us, but rather may there be accretions until we shall be fully furnished for every good word and work in this world! God hear us and bless us, for Christ's sake. Amen."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOLY LAND AND THE ORIENT.

On Bishop Wilson's first Episcopal visit to the Orient in 1886-87, he was accompanied by Rev. Collins Denny, who afterwards was elected to the Episcopacy, in whose father's home Bishop Wilson had for years been a welcome and an honored guest. An affection sprung up between the Bishop and his young friend, similar to that of Paul and Timothy, which developed and ripened through all the years which followed. The telegram which Bishop Denny sent Bishop Wilson's daughter upon learning of the death of her father reveals a love for his aged colleague "passing the love of women."

The Bishop wrote a series of delightful travel letters to Mrs. Wilson while on this visit in which he often referred in affectionate terms to his traveling companion. These letters are well worth being preserved in permanent form not only because of the graphic and picturesque style of the writer enabling the reader easily to visualize the objects described, but because of his full and accurate information respecting places of interest which have changed but little since his visit, as the conservative East is not remarkable for progress. Several Palestine letters are given in full with the exception of some personal references, and generous extracts are given from the others.

In a letter from Delhi, India, January 16, 1887, he spoke of preaching in Calcutta, and visiting Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus, and witnessing

evidences of appalling immoralities practiced under the name and protection of religion. It is not surprising that with his knowledge of the low moral state and the need of the heathen that his whole nature turned to the great work of missions, and that he on one occasion wrote this line from Japan to his wife:

“My interest in this work is as intense as it ever was. I could live and die for it. Let them locate me as a missionary Bishop out here and send you and the little ones to me, and I shall be content to spend the rest of my days here.”

This is what he says in the Delhi letter:

“On Tuesday morning I preached in the Wesleyan Church in Calcutta to a congregation of four or five hundred. The annual meeting of the Wesleyan Mission was in session and almost all the missionaries were present. At 6:30 p. m. I preached again in the M. E. Church, Dr. Thoburn's, to the largest congregation I have ever seen since I left America. There were at least fifteen hundred people present What I had seen of heathen defilements prompted me to preach from ‘Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.’ The same night at 9 o'clock we took the train for Benares, passing by Serampore, where Carey did his work. We reached Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus, about 4 p. m. on Monday The next morning we hired a carriage and went before breakfast to the river Ganges, the sacred river. We hired a boat and were rowed up and down the stream for an hour and a half. This gave us the view of the finest buildings in the city, which in their palmy state must have made a very brilliant and imposing appearance. At present they do not answer to the glowing description given of them by some travelers. They are largely gone into decay. The gilding is rubbed off and the whiteness is soiled. Some of them—the Mosque of Aurungzebe for instance—still

retain their unbroken proportions and their architectural splendor The most interesting sight of the morning was the long row of bathing *ghauts* or landing places where the people come to bathe, to wash their clothes and to worship the river. The ghauts are broad, massive stone stairways reaching from the high bluff on which the city stands down to the river. Most of them have a good deal of architectural decoration about them. They extend for some miles up and down the river and, at the early hour when we saw them, they were crowded with men, women, children and cows, who had come, or been brought, to wash in the sacred water and offer their devotions to the river. It was pitiful to see them kneeling with clasped hands and bowed heads, muttering their prayers to the filthy stream. After breakfast, we took our carriage again and went to see the principal temples and other points of interest in the city. I cannot describe them. They are too many and would require too minute details. I can only say that the carved work on some of them was more foully disgusting and loathsome than I had any idea of, and I had read much of the debasements and defilements of idolatry. What is worse these representations are but too true exponents of the life and practices of the people who worship in these temples. The speculative discussions of the ulterior moral and spiritual significance of the symbolism of idolatry and the rose-water sentimental condoning the sin and crime of idolatrous systems so fashionable with some classes of people are the sheerest nonsense in face of the facts on exhibition here. Paul was literally right when he wrote the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The pollutions and degradation of idolatry are unspeakable. The sacred city of the Hindus is indescribably worse than any community in the worst and most lawless sections of any Christian country. Yet here Hindus in multitudes come to die and believe that dying here they have direct entrance into their heaven."

Writing from Bombay, India, under the date January 26, 1887, he gave a description of his visit to

the "Towers of Silence" of that city and the revolting use to which they are put, which one cannot read without an uncanny sensation:

"Dr. Stone came in one afternoon to take me to his house to meet the ladies of the M. E. Mission, Dr. Stevens and wife and take tiffin and then to go to the 'towers of silence.' I had just taken all the tiffin I wanted; but went with him, spent a pleasant hour with the ladies—American and native—and Dr. Stevens, and then we drove to the towers. These are Parsee burying places. Burying is not an appropriate word. They do not bury. There are five towers, twenty-eight feet high and ninety feet in diameter. The lower half of each tower—that is fourteen feet of the height—is of solid masonry with a well in the center one hundred and fifty feet in circumference. The upper half is only an inclosing wall a couple of feet thick, through which is an iron door opening upon the top of the masonry around the wall. This surface is terraced so as to provide for the deposit of dead bodies in three rows, the lowest next the well for infants, the next above for women, the third, nearest the outer wall, for men. There is a walk between the terrace for men and that for women; and another between the women and the children, going around the circle of the tower. Along these walks the carriers of the dead bear the bodies until they reach the place of deposit. The living, except these carriers, are not permitted to come within thirty paces of the tower. The dead are carried into the tower, stripped entirely naked and laid in the place provided and the carriers retire and lock the door. The tower is open at the top; and in five minutes the *vultures have eaten up the dead body*. A funeral procession preceded us as we went up to the towers and we had to wait until the body had been deposited and the party returned. The delay was not ten minutes; but when we came to the tower the gorged vultures had finished their task and were sitting close packed on the wall of the tower waiting for their next meal. Nothing was left of the dead man but a few pieces

of bone and the liquid parts that ran down into the well. That is a Parsee funeral. The towers stand on a high hill in the midst of the most populous part of Bombay and are surrounded by highly ornamental grounds, above which clouds of vultures hover continually. There is a fine view of the entire city of Bombay and the harbor from the eminence. But it is a loathsome place with all its beauty. Strong efforts have been made to compel the removal of the towers from the city; but the Parsees are very rich and influential and have baffled the Christian sentiment and decency of Bombay in every endeavor."

Concerning Cairo, Egypt, which on account of its wonderful climate in winter, has developed into a famous resort for the wealthy during that season of the year, he wrote

"It has a thousand attractions—not the least of which is the vast variety of real life to be seen in its streets. It is a cosmopolitan city. There are more nationalities represented there than in any city I have yet seen. I read signs over stores and cafes in Hebrew, Greek, German, Italian, Spanish and English and saw others in Syrian, Arabic, Coptic, Turkish and other languages. The various races live in separate quarters bearing their names; but mingle freely in the business parts of the town. In the older parts you may see repeated the scenes of the Arabian Nights—the open shops, the cross-legged owners waiting with eastern imperturbability for customers, or chaffering over a trade and calling upon the voluble crowd gathered as always to help in the transaction, the noise, the confusion, the donkeys, camels—all. It would not be difficult to imagine, after standing for a while in one of the thoroughfares and becoming somewhat identified with the surroundings, that the Sultan Haroun and his vizier Giaour, were passing by taking notes."

His description of the landing at the dangerous port of Joppa will vividly recall the experiences of those who have disembarked at this rocky harbor.

The coast of Palestine is known as one of the most inhospitable in the world. George Adam Smith in his "Historical Geography of the Holy Land" says:

"Thus while the cruelty of many another wild coast is known by the wrecks of ships, the Syrian shore south of Carmel is strewn with the fiercest wreckage of harbours.

"I have twice sailed along this coast on a summer afternoon with the western sun thoroughly illuminating it, and I remember no break in the long line of foam where land and sea met, no single spot where the land gave way and welcomed the sea to itself. On both occasions the air was quiet, yet all along the line there was disturbance. It seemed as if the land was everywhere saying to the sea: I do not wish you, I do not need you. And this echoes through most of the Old Testament. Here the sea spreads before us for spectacle, for symbol, for music, for promise, but never for use—save in one case, when a prophet sought it as an escape from his God."

This letter dated Jerusalem, Palestine, February 27, 1887, contains a thrilling description of the landing at Joppa, notes the places of historic interest of that ancient seaport, describes an uncomfortable journey to Jerusalem, and the wonders of the "Holy City."

A railroad has been constructed from Joppa to Jerusalem since the Bishop made his visit, so that the journey can be made today in comparative comfort.

"Friday morning at 11," the letter reads, "we came to Jaffa and found the sea so high that I feared we could not land. The Captain of the steamer shared my fear. After half an hour, in answer to our signal, we saw some boats put out from shore and watched and waited with some anxiety to see if they could ride the waves. They seemed at times to go under; but after all came safely to the ship's side. The labor then was to get into them. The steamer and the boats were tossing up and down at

a furious rate; and no little address was required to make the passage from one to the other. I went first. Watching carefully, I seized the moment when the steamer went lowest and the boats came on the crest of the wave and dropped on my feet all right. Collins made a narrow escape. Caught by two Arab boatman he was held upright as he came down into the boat; but just as he touched the boat a tremendous sea threw it up against the gangway. Fortunately one of the men holding him stumbled backwards against some baggage and drew Collins over with him. But for that accident Collins would most certainly have been crushed; and I do not see how he could have escaped with life. It was a very narrow escape; and Collins was the only one who did not see it. Before we left the ship Mr. Rollo Floyd, to whom we had written wishing to contract with him for our passage through Palestine, came to us and took charge of us and our luggage. He is a Maine man, looks like a country farmer, is as familiar with Palestine as you are with the room you live in, knows the Bible as well, can give books, chapters and verse for every place and name in the country, knows its profane history as well and withal is a very devout Christian man. We told him what we wanted; and he is to see that we go through. It will cost us about seven dollars and a half a day, which includes dragoman, horses, tents, provisions, everything needed for the trip.

“The port of Jaffa—Joppa—is the traditional neighborhood of Jonah’s expedition in the whale. We saw no whale. The rocks just off shore make it a very dangerous landing place, so that I wondered how Hiram, King of Tyre, could land there the timber he sent to Solomon for the temple. Afterwards I was shown a pond, or lake half a mile inland which is said to have communicated in Solomon’s time with the sea and to have been the place where Hiram’s vessels were unloaded. Old anchors and ships and timbers have been brought up from the bottom of it showing that it had once been an anchorage for vessels. As soon as we got on our land legs, we started out to survey Joppa. We took another look at the sea

through whose surf and dangerous rocks we had come—among which, I forgot to say above, is the rock to which Andromeda was chained to be devoured of the monster and from which she was delivered by Perseus and then went down the street to look for one ‘Simon, whose surname is Peter. He lodgeth with one Simon the tanner, whose house is by the seaside.’ We found the house said to be on the spot where Simon lived and lineal successor to his dwelling place. There is an ancient well by it which has been in use for a tannery. That is the reason for fixing on this site, there being no other within the city, by the seaside, that has been used as a tannery. We went on the roof; but we had had our lunch and fell into no trance. We saw the spot where Peter raised Dorcas—so it is said. There is a public fountain there now. Then we went up to the mission school conducted by some ladies of the Scotch church, had a pleasant talk with them and heard the girls sing in Arabic ‘Over There,’ and one or two other familiar tunes; and ended our explorations for the day with a visit to a medical mission conducted by half a dozen ladies of the English Church. They were very agreeable and showed us all the buildings and arrangements, new and very thorough and with the finest situation in Jaffa, overlooking sea and land. We were in the portion of Dan and looked out over the plain of Sharon, beyond to the sandy hills of Philistia and still farther to the mountains of Judea. It was a goodly land as we saw it. Jaffa agreeably surprised me. It is very imposing in its appearance from sea, crowning the hill that rises up from the shore, well and closely built and very attractive. Within it has the usual features of an eastern city. narrow, dirty, ill-paved streets; houses often built quite across so that in walking the streets we passed under them, noisy crowded bazaars, ill-dressed, dirty people, dogs, etc., etc. The foreign part of it is neat and pleasant.

“Yesterday morning we started early for Jerusalem and had a cold, wet, stormy ride—forty miles. It would have been a delightful ride on a fair day. We passed by many places of scriptural interest and historic. Vineyards and olive groves the first part of the way; then the



1. Bishop and Mrs. Wilson at a Railway Station in Japan (1907)
2. Bishop and Mrs. Wilson in Japan (1907)

plain of Sharon, broad, rich and beautiful, but no roses; then Ramleh, the traditional Arimathea (by the way, the first native I met was Joseph of Arimathea), then, Latrin, or Latrone, where *it is said*, the penitent thief was brought up; from the tower of Ramleh we saw Gezer, which Pharaoh took and gave to his daughter, Solomon's wife, and Lydda, where Peter was when they sent for him to come to Joppa on Dorcas's account. Then we passed Amwas which, if the Sinaitic manuscript is right, is the Emmaus of the New Testament, then the vale of Elah, which, it is contended, is the place where David slew Goliath of Gath. Then we came to the narrow mountain pass where Judas Maccabaeus with his handful of followers so terribly defeated the Greeks. Up this we ascended, by many a place of historic interest, until at 5 P. M. we came to the Holy City. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole land, is Mount Zion. Our hotel looks in front upon the valley of the Son of Hinnom; and from my window, in the rear, across the city rises the Mount of Olives. The church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Mosque of Omar are in sight; and indeed I look down upon almost all the city. My cold was rather aggravated by the cold, wet ride yesterday and kept me in the house this morning. This afternoon I followed our dragoman and went to a religious meeting of an American colony settled here, for what purpose I am unable to say. They say that they were directed by the Spirit to come. But they are not missionaries—making no effort to convert the people; they renounce all business, attending only to personal and household affairs; and, while living in community, have discarded the married relation. They claim to live exclusively by faith. They had a Bible reading about Nebuchadnezzar. Then some comments by men and women, all being on the same footing, a prayer by a woman, some very pleasant singing and the doxology. I remained an hour afterwards talking with them and went to the top of their house, which is built against the city wall, and had a perfect view of the entire city and its environs. Then we went into the church of the Holy Sepulchre to see 'the place where the Lord lay' There are too many things in

this same enclosure—Adam's tomb, the place where Abraham offered Isaac, Calvary, the Sepulchre and I know not how many others. I do not believe in any of them. The church, however, is well worth a visit, with its manifold arrangements for different creeds, Greek, Latin, Armenian, Coptic, and is furnished with great cost. I want to see it lighted, with its silver and golden lamps and hope to be able to do so before I leave.

“This day, the 28th, I have wandered about Zion's Hill and Mt. Moriah. A great many things are shown—very few verified. The city is a great mass of lying traditions and puerile superstition. It is painful to follow the ways marked out for credulous visitors and note how the blessed facts of our Gospel have been perverted to purposes of gain and sectarian domination. The general outlines of the city are easily traceable. Mt. Zion, Mt. Moriah, Mt. Acra, Bezetha, the four quarters of the city, are known beyond dispute. The temple was on Mt. Moriah and some of its remains—especially the subterranean—are unquestionable. I very strongly incline to the belief that the huge rock in the center of what is erroneously called the Mosque of Omar was the altar of burnt offerings; and from this may be traced the general outlines of the temple. But I have not the slightest faith in the localities designated as the scenes of the manifold occurrences in New Testament history. I cannot name them all; but a specimen, or two will serve for the whole mass. In the Mosque of El-Aksa is shown a print in a stone said to be that of the foot of Jesus when He stood in the temple disputing—at twelve years of age—with the doctors. On the Via Dolorosa is shown in a wall the print of His hand when He fell under the weight of the cross. The houses of Caiaphas, Annas, Simon, the Cyrenian, Veronica, Dives are to be seen on the same road. Under the Mosque of Omar is the place Solomon and David were wont to pray. And many such like traditions they hold. I will not recount them. It is enough for me that the Son of God lived, walked and talked with men within these precincts and probably trod the stairway—now subterranean—upon which I passed today, as He went to the

temple. The wonderful drama of old Jewish history was enacted here. This is the chosen seat of the exposition of the processes of the providence of God. There is very much, too, of interest that does not belong to Biblical history. The Maccabees and the Crusaders have left their mark here. The Mohammedans have recorded their name and prowess here. Their Mosques are almost as rich in tradition as Christian churches. They lay claim to the inheritance of patriarchal history equally with the Jews and do not refuse a place of honor to Jesus as a prophet of the one God. So I went the round of their records in the Mosque of Omar, the Mosque of El-Aksa, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the church of St. Anna, mother of the Virgin, the church where the Son of God was said to have been scourged and crowned with thorns, and saw His foot prints, His cradle, His prison, etc., etc."

His second letter from Palestine was written from Jerusalem, March 6, 1887, and records his journey to Hebron in which, it is said, live the most fanatical and dangerous Arabs in Palestine. They guard with a mad devotion the Mosque-enclosed tomb of Abraham. The ride to Jericho and the Dead Sea was not without its perils because the rocky bridle path they had to travel led around the edges of cliffs and other dangerous places. In 1898 a few years after the Bishop had seen Palestine on the occasion of the visit of the Emperor of Germany to Jerusalem to attend the dedication of the Church of the Redeemer, the Sultan of Turkey built a splendid roadway from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea by way of Jericho and also another from Jerusalem to Nazareth for the convenience and comfort of that royal personage who wished to make a pilgrimage to those sacred places. This letter reads:

"I am still sniffing and coughing and conclude that it is better for me to stay by the fire and write to you than

face this strong, cold March wind in order to witness the mass at the church of the Holy Sepulchre. I have very little inclination to be a witness to such performances and, however splendid and imposing they may be, I have much more of Paul's feeling in the midst of the magnificence of Athenian art—'His spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.' There is no English service in the city except the reading for the first Sunday in Lent at the Anglican Church.

"We had fine weather for our trip to Hebron, and the Dead Sea, which we made according to our programme. On Tuesday morning we started on very good horses, passed within sight of Bethlehem and through the wilderness of Judea, by the pool of Solomon, from which he brought water to Jerusalem, stopping to lunch in the open air, under the shade of a ledge of rocks, in which a series of tombs had been cut in ancient time, and came to Hebron about 4 P. M. We found accommodations at a Russian Convent and, after disposing there of our chattels, rode on to the city, about a mile distant. The first five miles of our way from Jerusalem took us over an excellent road; but from that on we had only rough and narrow bridle paths over the mountains, rocky and steep, and were compelled to move at a slow pace. In Hebron we could see but little. There is a Mohammedan Mosque built over the reputed cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, were buried. The Mussulmans here are a fanatical, hostile tribe, ready on the slightest provocation to attack any Christians coming that way. We could only, through favor of the old Sheik, look through an opening in the wall into the Cave and, as it was totally dark inside, could see nothing. By a special firman from the Sultan of Turkey the Prince of Wales was admitted into the Mosque some years ago and took Dean Stanley with him. The description of it is given by Stanley in his 'Sinai and Palestine' which you can read when you get at my books again. The city itself is unlike all other cities of Palestine, situated in a valley and a very fertile one. There is an ancient oak at the Convent where we stayed which is said to be the oak of Mamre,

where Abraham sat when the angels came to him; or, at least, a descendant of it, on the same spot.

“Early in the morning we retraced our steps and came to Bethlehem, where we looked through the church of the Nativity, which contains the manger in which the Lord was laid, the altar on which the wise men worshipped, the tomb of the Innocents whom Herod slew. and many other things wanting verification. There is a grotto there in which Mary is said to have nursed her son, and, having dropped some of her milk on the rock, gave it the property of imparting to mothers whose milk fails the power to nurse their children. The nuns grind the rock to powder, put some of it into small cakes, or lozenges and sell them. I declined to purchase. We rode through the fields of Boaz where Ruth gleaned and David watched and guarded his father’s flocks. In two hours we came to Mar Saba, a convent founded by St. Sabas in the fourth century, where we found rest for the night. There is here a fine old library, in which Tischendorff found some valuable manuscripts, but from which the ignorant monks, themselves unable to make any use of it, exclude everybody. The convent is built on the side of the mountain and cannot be seen until it is reached. From the door of entrance we had to descend more than a hundred steps to reach the great chamber. The only occupation of the monks seems to be the performance of their various services, to which they have added such gardening as the place admits, and feeding the wild birds of the surrounding country. The birds of all sorts come at the ringing of a bell at certain hours and take food from the hands of the monks. The country for miles in every direction is as desolate as can well be conceived. I saw no habitation of man on the way from Bethlehem to Mar Saba; nor from Mar Saba to the Dead Sea except some Bedouin camps. We left Mar Saba at daylight, guarded by two Bedouins, one on horseback, one on foot, besides our dragoman, and by 10:30 A. M. came to the Dead Sea. The road, or path, for it was no more, lay along the side of the mountains, with only a footing of twelve or fourteen inches wide to save us from a sheer descent of twelve or fifteen hundred feet. It was

the only ride I have had since I left home on which I felt thankful that you were not with me. I doubt if you could have made it, though some ladies have ridden by this way. I was very agreeably disappointed in the appearance of the Dead Sea. It lies in a very deep basin, twelve hundred and ninety feet below sea level, washing the base of the mountains of Moab on the east side and the mountains of Judea on the west. It reminded me somewhat of Lake George. The tales of my youth concerning the utter deadness of all the surrounding regions were not confirmed. The mountains of either side, though rugged and seamed, had much of verdure on them; and at the head of the Sea, where we stopped, the low brush gave shelter to partridges and many other birds, which flew out as we rode along. From the Dead Sea to the Jordan we passed over a tract of four or five miles of salt land, wholly unproductive. We took a bath in the salt waters and found them so heavy it was almost impossible to get under them. I folded my arms and lay on my back and called for a pillow. The waters were very irritating to the skin, and required to be washed off with fresh water. We had some with us and I used it as soon as I came out. Denny took a bath in the Jordan an hour afterwards. I did not. One cold bath in this March season was enough for me, though it was much warmer in the basin of the Dead Sea than it is here in Jerusalem. There is nearly thirty-six hundred feet difference in altitude, Jerusalem being twenty-three hundred feet above sea level. On the banks of the Jordan we met a party of ladies from Maryland and Virginia . . . The place where we stopped and took our lunch was where Joshua led Israel over. There can be very little doubt as to this locality. It is the only crossing within reach of Jericho, and leads directly to Gilgal, where Joshua encamped and renewed the rite of circumcision. We went after lunch to Jericho, saw the fountain—reputed—whose waters Elisha healed for the benefit of the city and lodged that night in another Russian convent. The plain of Jericho is very beautiful and very fertile; but I saw not a single palm tree in what was known as the "City of Palms." Nor did I see a sycamore—

properly sycamine—such as Zaccheus climbed to see Jesus. The site of Zaccheus' house was shown—a tower now built on it. In the morning we started in the rain, which soon ceased, on the way to Bethany. The wind was fierce and our horses full of life and we galloped at full speed a great part of the way along the steep mountain paths. At Bethany we encountered a severe hail storm, but nevertheless visited everything of interest—the house of Mary and Martha, the tomb of Lazarus—or tombs, for there are two; his first from which he was raised, and his second and his final one—one claimed by Christians, one by Mohammedans—the house of Simon the leper, the Mount of Ascension and other places of later interest; then came down the Mount of Olives to the tomb of the prophets and paid another visit to Gethsemane, and came in a driving hail storm back to Jerusalem. This last afternoon was the only unseasonable period we had during our trip and we considered ourselves fortunate in that nothing in the uncertain weather of March has interfered with any of our plans.”

The third Palestine letter is dated Jenin, March 10, 1887. Jenin is a camping place familiar to all Palestinian tourists. This letter is a wonderful description of the sacred places of Northern Palestine, with Scriptural references to them. There are two things in connection with these letters that are marvelous to the author who in 1913 covered practically the same ground “With Tent and Donkey.” The first is the almost inexhaustible sources of information, historical, Biblical and scientific, the Bishop had at his command, and the second is the time he found in the roughing it through Palestine to write such brilliant and informing letters. The reader will necessarily get an intelligent and just conception of that land which on account of its hal-

lowed associations will always hold within itself a perennial fascination for every Christian heart.

"I am sojourning in tents," he wrote "as my father Abraham did, being heir with him to the same promise. Our outfit looks extensive for two small men. There are two tents with their furniture, consisting for the one of two bedsteads with their mattresses and clothing, a table, three camp chairs, and a couple of rugs; for the other, of all needful cooking utensils, and sleeping rugs for our employees. We have a dragoman, a very intelligent, accommodating and good tempered young Arab, a hostler, whose business it is to be at hand whenever and wherever we stop, to look after our horses, himself going afoot—no easy task for men who go as fast as we and will see everything within reach, and four mule drivers. Three horses and four mules make up our live stock. We pay seven dollars and a half a day each for this array, which also includes our provisions and *bachsheesh*. In the morning our first business is to get up and make a hasty toilet. Then our breakfast is brought in and before we are fairly through with it the tent is taken down. By eight o'clock we are in the saddle. We stop at 12:30 or 1 P. M. for lunch, under a tree, against a rock, in a house, or wherever we conveniently can. In an hour, or hour and a half, we start again and ride to the predetermined end of our day's journey. We left Jerusalem on Tuesday morning, going first to Neby-Samwil—the ancient Mizpeh—passing in sight of Gibeah and Ramah. From Mizpeh we had our last view of Jerusalem. We went on to Biren, ancient Beeroth, to lunch in a Mohammedan house, which for a consideration was opened to us. After lunch we rode steadily on to Sinjil, a place of no special importance, where we pitched our tents for the night. The next morning we rode to Jacob's well, 'near the parcel of ground which he gave to his son Joseph.' The well is still there, although the masonry which covered it in has, for the most part, fallen in. We sat and lunched very near where our Lord sat while the disciples went away into the city to buy meat. A few hundred feet off is a tomb said to be Joseph's.

Just above are, on the left hand Mt. Gerizim, with its old altar of sacrifice, now a Mohammedan Mosque: in full view on the right hand, Mt. Ebal . We went to the Samaritan synagogue and had a sight of what I suppose is the oldest manuscript of the Pentateuch in existence. It dates back to our Lord's time The Rabbi first brought out one of later date; but I told him I must see the oldest. He consented and I bought his likeness with the old manuscript in his hand for a franc. We pitched our tents just this side Nablous. This morning we went first to Samaria. On the hill, just before reaching it, we had our first view of 'snow-clad Hermon,' standing out in the morning sun beyond a long roll of mountains and plains. We expect to encamp on its side one night next week. We halted to see Samaria, 'at the head of the fat valleys,' as it is, indeed, a beautiful situation, hardly inferior to Jerusalem. We saw where Omri built his ivory palace, the king's gardens and the colonnade of Herod's time. Then we came on to Jeba and lunched in a beautiful olive grove. After lunch we rode to Dothan, where Joseph sought his brethren and was by them thrown into a pit and then sold to Egypt, and whose sides were once covered with horses of fire and chariots of fire in defense of Elisha against the Syrians. From there we rode to Jenin, ancient En-gannim, or, Fount of the Gardens, where we are encamped in the edge of the plains of Esdraelon. Our whole way from Jerusalem has been across mountains and valleys, a rough, rocky ride, in many places very steep. I am becoming quite accustomed to horseback. The soreness and excessive weariness of my first days last week, going to Hebron and the Jordan, have passed away and I am as much at home in the saddle as in my younger days. I have a good horse and our dragoman says we are not travelers but hunters, i. e. we go too fast. We are making the most of our opportunities. The jackals—Samson's foxes—have been howling around our camp, and Denny has gone out to see if he can shoot one by moonlight. We saw several on our way today; but could not get a shot at them.

“Sunday, March 13, 1887 I am writing in the open air, sitting in the shadow of my tent. The sun is shining in his strength, lending a Sabbath glory to the hills and fields and olive groves that lie around us. The spring-time is come; for the fig-tree shows a tender branch and putteth forth leaves. The summer is nigh in this land. We left Jenin on Thursday morning, crossing the plain of Esdraelon to Shunem, where dwelt the woman whose son Elisha raised; through the fields of Naboth, which Ahab coveted, to Jezreel; to Nain, where Jesus raised the son of the widow; by Endor, whose witch brought up Samuel at Saul’s instance, to Mt. Tabor, on whose top, after as steep and difficult ascent as I ever made on horseback, we lunched. To our right hand, as we rode over the plain, were the mountains of Gilboa, across the sloping end of which we passed, and in front of us, Little Hermon, around which we traveled. All these villages lie on small hills projecting out from the mountain ranges, or rising from the midst of the plain and, at a little distance, look very beautiful in the bright sunlight in the midst of the fresh verdure of spring, which covers the plain and sides of the mountains. Off to our left and forward lay Mt. Carmel, on whose top we could see the church standing where, it is said, Elijah offered his sacrifice. Mt. Tabor gives sight of a wide sweep of landscape, Mt. Hermon on the north, the mountains of Moab and Bashan, north and east of the Jordan, the sea of Galilee, to the northeast, the Jordan with the mountains beyond, to the east, Little Hermon, Gilboa, the plains of Esdraelon and Megiddo, and the hills of Ephraim and Judah, on the south; and Carmel and the mountains of Galilee, on the west. Tabor has on it the ruins of an old Roman castle and of a town that was four miles in circuit, which seems to negative the idea that it was the scene of the transfiguration. It was by no means a lonely site in our Lord’s time, but was the seat of a considerable population. Yet the Greek and Latin churches have, each, a convent and a church there, claiming to be on the very ground where he was transfigured. After lunch and an exploration of the ruins, we descended the mountain and made our way across the mountains of

Galilee to Nazareth, where we found our tents pitched in a valley at the base of the city, commanding an upward view of the entire place which lies on the sides of a semi-circle of hills and has a fresh and attractive appearance. There is a Latin church built on the spot where it is said the Nazarenes would have thrown Jesus down; and another on the site, it is said, of the house where Joseph and Mary lived. The spot is shown where the angel appeared to Mary. Of course, it assumes that Joseph and Mary were living in the same house before their marriage and both at Nazareth, which assumptions require proof. Yesterday, leaving our tents at Nazareth, we rode to Mt. Carmel, straight across the plain of Esdraelon, after leaving the hills of Nazareth. The weather was delightful and we made the distance in four hours to the top of the mountain. We had from there another fine view of the plain of Esdraelon. It looks like a carpet, laid off in oblong figures, well cultivated and very beautiful in its variety of colors. There is hardly a tree in its entire extent, which is due to the fact that the Turkish government exacts a heavy tax for every tree. The Mediterranean Sea lies off to the west of Carmel and, on the east, we had from another point of view, the same broad and variegated landscape that we had seen from Tabor. The country is picturesque beyond my anticipation and is in better condition by far than I expected to find it. The valleys are almost all thoroughly cultivated; and the hill sides are being taken up, cleared of stones and made available. It is an immensely fertile land and, when God's purpose in it shall be fulfilled, will be one of the richest, for its extent, and most beautiful on earth. Here at Nazareth we rest on the Lord's day and tomorrow go on to Tiberias. I ought to say that Nazareth is a Christian city, that is to say, the majority of its population belong to the Greek, Latin and Protestant churches. What a change since Nathaniel asked 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' It is the most thriving and busy looking place I have seen in Palestine. There is but one small Mohammedan mosque in the place."

This letter dated Tuesday, March 15, is the last of those written from the Holy Land.

"We left Nazareth on Monday morning, taking our way over the hills of Nazareth northward. Passing Gath-Hepher, the birthplace of the prophet Jonah, where, also, his tomb is shown, we came to Cana, or rather one of the two places claiming to be the scene of the Lord's first miracle. In the Greek church I was shown two of the water jars which He had filled and in which He turned the water into wine. (?) Thence we rode to Kurn Hattin said to be the Mt. of Beatitudes, where our Lord delivered the Sermon on the Mount. There is no certainty that it is the place; but I see no reason why it may not be. It is well situated for the purpose, a central point for the multitudes to gather from Nazareth, Cana, Tiberias, Capernaum, Bethsaida, etc.; and its sloping sides and the plain below could well accommodate the throng that followed Him. I climbed to the top on my horse, the hardest ascent I ever made on horseback, worse than Tabor, though much less of it, and sat down where I thought the Master might have sat and imagined the whole scene before me. To the northwest, on the very top of a mountain, in full view is Safed, the 'city set upon a hill that cannot be hid.' Multitudes of birds are singing in the bright sunshine all around, while the flowers of the field in this spring time cover the plain and sides of the hill. Stones and scorpions, also, abound. Off to the east lies the Sea of Galilee; and mountains are on every side. Hermon shows its snowy top and sides far off to the northeast. Nothing seemed wanting but the living figures. From there we rode down to Tiberias, a large part of which is still in ruins from the earthquake of 1837. It seems strange that there is no record that our Lord ever entered this city. We hired a boat here to take us up the lake to the mouth of the Jordan, where it enters the sea of Galilee, and had a delightful sail. The sea was as smooth as a mirror; a light haze was upon the mountains around; the air was soft and spring-like. The surface of the sea is six hundred and eighty-two feet below the level of the Mediterranean. From the mouth of

Jordan, at the north end of the sea, we coasted along by Tell Hum by many thought to be Capernaum—where we found masses of ruins and not a single habitation. Among the heaps, we saw the remains of what was perhaps a Christian church, much of the material of which dated back further than the Christian period and may have belonged to the synagogue which the centurion built for the Jews. Then we passed by what is supposed to be Bethsaida, where a few huts alone remain. From there we sailed on to our camp for the night at Khan-Minyeh, which, also, is claimed as Capernaum. There is nothing there to show that it was once a city. Our Lord's woe pronounced upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum have taken full effect, since even the sites of the two last are uncertain, and utter desolation reigns over and around all three. We left our camp at 8 o'clock this morning and rode slowly over a rough, rocky country, leaving the ruined site of Chorazin on our right hand and passing nothing of note until we came to the waters of Merom, near where Joshua fought with Jabin, King of Canaan, and his confederates, and routed them. The lake is now called Huleh and looks very attractive at a little distance; but it is almost inaccessible, being surrounded by marshes and steep cliffs. We are encamped for the night at Ain-Balatha, whose chief and, indeed, only attraction is a full flowing spring of bright, clear water. Numbers of Bedouins are on the plains in front of us watching their cattle and the steep, rocky mountain sides are immediately behind us. The Bedouin women are passing continually to and from the spring, with water jars on their heads. We are still wonderfully blessed in the weather. Before coming Cook's agents warned us that we would be flooded with rain and find the roads impracticable. We have not had a drop of rain since leaving Jerusalem.

"March 18. On Wednesday we came from Ain-Balatha, skirting around the edge of the marshy ground that lies north of the Waters of Merom and making our way over very rough and rocky paths, to Baniyas—ancient Caesarea Philippi. We stopped to lunch under some huge trees on the outskirts of the city of Dan, once called Laish,

an account of whose capture is given in Judges. Here is one of the main sources of the Jordan, a full flowing spring breaking out from the midst of the hill on which Dan was situated and running in a large stream—the Leddan, I think it is called—into the Jordan a short distance below. An hour after lunch we were at Baniyas, at the foot of Mt. Hermon. The main source of the Jordan is a magnificent spring, the largest I ever saw, bursting out from under the solid rock that forms the base of the mountain, through many passages, in a semi-circle of a hundred and fifty feet and rushing down the sides of the hills in beautiful cataracts until it reaches its bed. There is an old Roman castle in ruins standing on an isolated eminence, two thousand feet, I suppose, above the town. The ascent is very difficult; and, as I would have a good view of the whole of it in going up Mt. Hermon and knew very well what was to be seen, I did not go to it. Thursday morning we climbed five thousand feet over one of the passes of Mt. Hermon, stopped a while to eat some snow, the first we had seen for more than a year, and take a look at the Hauran, the land of the Amorites, stretching away to the eastward and to get our first view of Damascus in the distance. Then we came slowly down the mountain on the northern side and encamped for the night at Kefr Hauwar by the side of one of the branches of the river Pharpar. This morning we started at daylight, passed over a succession of broad, rocky hills, and about midday came down into the plain of Damascus. By two o'clock we were in our hotel, putting an end to our tent life in Palestine and Syria."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BISHOP AS A PREACHER.

Bishop Hendrix has said that Bishop Wilson was a four-fold man—a profound student, a great preacher, a wonderful organizer and a commanding bishop. But after all has been said of his accurate scholarship, his organizing genius, his administrative ability, he stands out preeminently as a preacher. He had none of the studied arts of the orator, nor the artificial ornamentation of the rhetorician. His manner in the pulpit was quiet and his delivery calm and unimpassioned except when he rose in magnificent flights of oratory with a compelling sweep and range of thought, that seemed bounded only by the eternities, and lifted his hearers to such spiritual heights that through heaven's unfolding portals they beheld visions of ineffable things. He spoke with the authority of a Hebrew prophet, with the dynamic force of a Saint Paul, and sometimes with the rapturous mysticism and seraphic sweetness of a saint John. As a forest is swayed by a tempest, he swayed vast assemblages by his marvelous expositions of the Scriptures and his inescapable applications of the truth.

His matchless insight into the meaning of God's word and his power of organizing and marshalling his thought in a fashion peculiar to himself enabled him to present the truth with almost irresistible force. Some one has said that his chief differentiation was in his preaching, that he was so unlike other men and

yet so free from the extraordinary as to be indescribable; and furthermore he had never known any other man who even with cold, incisive sentences, in a dispassionate exordium could often send a thrill through all the avenues of the being of his hearers. Truly as a preacher he baffled all classification.

The age has had few stronger thinkers or abler Christian philosophers than he. He dwelt in a realm of high thinking and holy living. It could not have been otherwise that he should have preached from a full heart and mind.

Bishop Wilson placed the largest estimate upon preaching of the proper sort, and throughout his life gave the full strength of his energies not simply to preaching, but to preaching the gospel; and this may account in some measure for his phenomenal power in the pulpit. In his farewell message to the General Conference of 1914, speaking of his ministry of more than sixty years, he said:

"Through it all I have tried, first of all, to maintain the character of a Methodist preacher, than which there is none higher on earth. I have sought to preach the gospel, only the gospel. I have not cared for side issues that have been raised. I have paid but little attention to the opposition of the world. I have had implicit faith in the power of the truth when it makes its appeal to the consciences of men in the sight of God, and I have drawn my lessons and inspirations from the Word of God, and from that only."

In 1901 he was a delegate to the Ecumenical Conference which met in London. One morning an eminent man who was to speak on "The Influence of Methodism in the Promotion of International Peace" failed to appear. An American who was on the



ST. PAUL'S M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH, BALTIMORE, MD.

executive committee suggested that Bishop Wilson take his place. The leaders thought it impossible that any man, without a moment's notice, could speak to and hold that throng from all nations of the earth. But he captivated his listeners in a fifteen-minute speech, one of the shortest of his life.

This address is reproduced, but it is impossible to reproduce the electrically charged atmosphere of the occasion, the subtle influences of the personality of the preacher permeating his utterances and filling the house, and the spiritual triumph which followed. Though the principles he emphasized are as sound today as they were at that time, without any of the attending circumstances, no conception can be obtained of the power of this deliverance. The Bishop spoke as follows:

"I shall not waste any time making apologies. If I say anything good, it is my own; and if I do not, charge it to the original, who ought to be here, and is not.

"The question itself is narrowed down, I think, to a very small space. A simple exhortation of the Apostle will show the place that we, as Methodists, and as a Church of God, occupy in relation to international peace: 'exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.' My impression is that the secret of the whole matter lies there. We may organize Peace Conference and pass peace resolutions in our Conference, and express ourselves in the newspapers, and all that sort of thing. But they are mere incidents, and if they be not sincere and genuine expressions of the spirit and power that underlie our relations to

God and to humanity, they are nothing more than the passing breeze, and amount to nothing.

"The element of power in Methodism has always been at the bottom. We have laid great stress upon personal spiritual life, we have insisted upon vital godliness. We have insisted in every other department of our religious life that is the essential thing, and nothing is available for use, or effective in service, without that. Is it not so also in this case? We do manufacture public opinion, but we do it by that subtle, invisible process which works within the secret chambers of human souls, and through the agencies of living experience—Christian life. There is more power to accomplish the peace of the world in our own rooms than there is in all the open Conferences that can be held. The men that move the world are the men that keep talking with God day by day. I have no doubt that the multitude of these saintly women who have influenced so largely the modern life of Christendom, unobtrusively and quietly, have done more to bring about a condition of things that promises peace in the future than we have done with our more open demonstrations and more active efforts.

"I am satisfied that at the bottom, after all, we have to get back to those first principles. John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus Christ preached to the soldier, and gave them directions as to their methods of life, but did not say a word about wars, or the causes of wars, except that they would be. They taught us nothing as to the reason why wars should be carried on, or why wars should cease. They only let us know that underlying all the commotion, tumult, disturbance, passion and strife of this world there were elements at work which in time would cause them all to subside and settle down into permanent and final composure and rest. It is to these elements that we are looking under a sort of chemical process that we cannot see or define; but the element is there and the force is there—the vital force. When Methodism takes its true place in relation to the nations of the world and international relations, it will be found that the power that has controlled and influenced and directed the whole course of events was

simply the individual religious life of the great body of the Church of God.

"I am quite satisfied that must be the case. We have had a great deal of effort made in these last years to influence legislation. I never had much faith in it. I do not look to law to promote temperance, or almost anything else that is good. I have never been satisfied that methods and agencies of that sort, except as the voluntary expression of an uncontrollable and all-powerful principle and vital element within, would avail anything. You may put some obstacles out of the way and bring in some incidental agencies that may smooth things over, but, after all, that which will work the result will be the consciousness that God is at work within men, and through the whole course of society and of nations too. 'The nations and the kingdoms'—that was the lesson which we heard this morning—'shall serve Him'; and unless they come to the recognition of Him we shall never get to that state of civilization and that position in relation to all the elements of a highly refined, cultured, and pure life that we are seeking.

"Our Methodism needs, first of all, cultivation of its spiritual power and life—recourse to the private room more than anything else, ceaseless daily prayer to God, which avails more than aught else besides; prayer for kings, and for all that are in authority, with a distinct view to the fact that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives. If I should speak for an hour, I do not know that I could say anything more than that. I hold St. Paul to be a first-class authority, and I am very well satisfied that when we get outside the range—narrow as it may seem—of the prescriptions and provisions of the Gospel and the New Testament, we shall be very apt to go astray. All the rest of it is mere conjecture, and speculation, and effort, oftentimes baseless, of our human reason and human energies; but when we get to that, we are on solid ground. We cannot make any mistake there.

"What Jesus Christ says is absolutely certain. What St. Paul says we take upon Divine authority. We are sure that things that they tell us to do are exactly the

things that we ought to do, and that if we do them, the necessary result will follow: We complain that we have lived so long since Christ spoke, and Paul talked, without having achieved the result. Well, have we done any better on any other line? Our great aim has been right against sin. We have been fighting it through all these centuries; yet it is about us every day, open, barefaced, unashamed. We see it, and we scarcely take notice of it. We simply shrug our shoulders if it is a little more pronounced than usual, and turn away and smile. We do not feel that awful horror at its presence which took the Psalmist when he saw people violating the law. So it is with wars and tumults, and things of that sort. We have to get rid of the sin first, and then we shall get rid of the wars. Strike at that, the root of the whole business. Aim at the very fundamental and essential evil of the matter, and when you have that out of the way you will get all the rest out; for Christ came, 'not to send peace on the earth, but a sword,' until the sword should hew down everything that stood against Him. When that is done, we can look for quietness and assurance forever."

When it was announced that he would speak at St. James Hall a few evenings later, a vast throng was present and all eyes were turned upon the American Bishop. The meeting was presided over by the Honorable R. W. Perks, M. P. This time the Bishop spoke over an hour on "The Moral Unity of the English-Speaking Peoples." When he had finished, the large audience rose and pressed toward the platform to bear him in triumph on their shoulders; but with his accustomed modesty, he would have none of this. It was pronounced by many of the pulpit orators present as the greatest missionary sermon they had ever heard, for his theme was susceptible of a missionary application of the largest dimensions.

The question has been asked. Did Bishop Wilson ever make what men call a failure? Did he ever fall below his standard because of adverse physical conditions and lack of mental stimulus? Rarely. His mind was so constituted and trained, his spirit was so well poised, and his faith built upon such impregnable foundations that he was not usually depressed by unfavorable environments. He felt that preaching was a matter of duty and privilege and always did his best.

Once at a District Conference where he had preached and had charmed and inspired the people with his uplifting utterances, there was a general desire that he should preach again on the closing night of the Conference. He consented. The Church was crowded with people eager to hear him. The Bishop rose, announced the hymn, and afterwards his text, and began his sermon, but had difficulty in proceeding. After speaking for five or six minutes, he grew pale and sat down. He had been seized with an attack of vertigo which detained him at the seat of the Conference for several days after its adjournment.

Dr. S. A. Steel has given an account of a time when he says Bishop Wilson did not measure up to expectation. He writes:

"I was with him at a District Conference once. It was in August. The weather was hot, close, and stifling. It wilted everything. An archangel's plume would have drooped in such an atmosphere. Bishop Wilson preached at eleven o'clock, but not with his usual sweep and power. The people went away disappointed. Many had come for miles to hear the great preacher. The humid atmosphere had proved too much for him."

But Dr. Steel had to preach at night. Bishop Wilson was in the pulpit, and the same brand of atmosphere was in both pulpit and pew. Dr. Steel describes his experience:

"My machine would not work. After perhaps fifteen minutes of useless struggle to start something, I stopped and said: 'Brethren, I'm in the brush. I know it. God knows it. I expect you know it. But one other thing I know, salvation is free, hallelujah!' Some brother shouted out 'Amen,' then another said 'Hallelujah,' and others joined in shouting 'Amen.' It started a whirlwind and we broke up with a grand 'old-time religion' meeting. Some time after I met Bishop Wilson. He greeted me cordially, and said, 'I haven't seen you since you were in the brush at _____ District Conference.' 'Yes,' I replied, 'if I remember aright, you were "in the brush," too. I got out and you didn't.' 'Well,' he said, 'you hollered your way out.' He sometimes failed; but that seldom happened, and even his failures were beyond the best of most of us."

Dr. Steel adds: "I have often wondered how our Bishops preach as well as they do at an Annual Conference, when from Wednesday to Saturday they are engaged with the business of the session, often involved in much anxiety about the appointments of the preachers, and pressed with a hundred details. But if these things ever got in Bishop Wilson's way, he never showed any trace of it in preaching. And when he swung loose, it was good to be there. He was slow getting started, like a big ocean liner. But once in the channel, my, my, how majestically he moved! You did not have the dazzling imagination of Munsey; you missed the polished periods of Galloway; there was none of the emotional eloquence of Kavanaugh, or Marvin's rapturous flights. But you were lifted by a tidal wave of spiritual power and borne upward and onward until heaven seemed to be all around you, and the Delectable Mountains and the Land of Beulah were in full view."

The question can with better grace be asked, "Has the Church ever produced any other man who has preached a larger number of great sermons or whose preaching has been more uniformly great?"

Has it ever produced any other man who was such a masterly interpreter of the mind, and such a luminous expositor of the Epistles of Saint Paul? In this field he was almost peerless. His expositions were so clear, so profound, so inspiring and convincing, that many have regarded him as the mightiest expository preacher of the world. Bishop Hoss says of him in this connection:

"It is safe to say that no Methodist minister has ever been more thoroughly saturated with the Pauline Epistles than Bishop A. W. Wilson. To use the language of Lord Bacon, he has literally 'chewed them inwardly and digested them.' They have been his meditation day and night for more than fifty years. Whenever he spoke concerning them, it is with the authority of a full and penetrating knowledge."

But, as Bishop Hoss so well says, he did not confine his thinking to Paul.

"Nearly everybody that has written of him has referred to the Pauline tone of his preaching, and justly so. But this does not mean that he was shut up to Paul. He literally reveled in the Gospels, and found immense satisfaction in the great passages of the Old Testament. Many have referred to his familiarity with the Greek Testament. In this respect, we have had no man in my day, with the possible exception of Dr. Gross Alexander, who began to be his equal. In his prime, he was also very fond of the Hebrew Psalter.

"More than any man I have ever known he resembled an old Hebrew prophet. In his preaching he was never a logic chopper, laying down premises and drawing painfully

a narrow conclusion, but he always spoke with authority as a man who had heard the Word of the Lord and felt that he must deliver it. Whether he made this impression upon others to as great an extent as he did upon me I cannot tell, but I am sure that I never listened to a man in my life whose utterances seemed to come more straight from an intuition of the eternal truth."

The author is indebted to Bishop Hoss for an incident concerning a sermon that Bishop Wilson preached in the far South and that had a marvelous effect on his hearers. This is the story as Bishop Hoss tells it.

"I suppose, however, in his entire career he was never greater than in a Thanksgiving sermon which he preached before the North Texas Conference at Wichita Falls. Dr. J. W. Hill, who tells the story so admirably, once gave me an account of it. He went to Church that day with Judge E. B. Perkins. The house was crowded, and as the services progressed, a deepening sense of awe fell upon the audience, so that when the benediction was pronounced, nobody moved. After a few minutes of silence, however, Hill said to Judge Perkins: 'It's time to go, isn't it?'

"'No,' replied the Judge, 'Please let me alone, Hill, I haven't lit yet.'

"After a pause, he added: 'Hill, I used to think that you and J. W. Clark were great preachers, but I was altogether in error about that. You can't begin to preach; you can't even take a text.'

On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, Bishop Candler wrote this estimate of him as a preacher:

"In the English-speaking nations are found the greatest living preachers, and after hearing all of the greatest among them, I sincerely believe Bishop Alpheus W. Wilson is greater than any of them. He expounds the Scripture with a clearness, power, and authority such as no other preacher whom I hear can equal. He is a great believer,

and preaches with strength because he believes with strength."

Bishop Denny on the same occasion said:

"More than anything else Bishop Wilson is a preacher. He was divinely called to preach the gospel, and to him to proclaim the message of his Lord has always been a solemn and a happy privilege. At times the effect of his sermons is overwhelming, and his audiences disperse knowing that they have heard a man of rare gifts, great intellect, and spiritual power."

Later Bishop Denny wrote:

"Perhaps no man in Methodism has been so unanimously acclaimed as the greatest preacher ever raised up among us. He was a careful and constant student of the sacred Scriptures in their original tongues, and he also read and loved his English Bible. He thought deeply and constantly of the truth God has revealed to men. He dug deeply, patiently, persistently into its treasures. He made Paul his very own and joyed in his fellowship in Christ in company with the master apostle; not that he neglected or disparaged other prophets and apostles, for this he never did, but that he advanced far beyond his brethren in his grasp of Pauline theology and in sympathy with the truth the apostle to the Gentiles was chosen to teach. He was given to prayer, ejaculatory prayer, much prayer, and more and more prayer. He loved prayer, yet was free from ostentation in that holy exercise, as in everything else he did.

"His preaching was marked by the dominant note of certitude and authority, and he eschewed the matters of probability. His Lord had spoken in his word and also in his own heart, and he spoke out what had come to him from the heavens. Not only was his preaching marked by this dominant and persistent note, but also by constant bursts of originality, by the steady flame of genius, by rare fertility of suggestiveness, by amazingly wide reaches of thought, and by unflagging devotion to his Lord. No

part of his work appealed to him so strongly, and in none did he so greatly rejoice and exercise himself more constantly than in preaching with power the blessed gospel of the glorious God. He believed that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him, and throughout the world the multitudes of people who heard him for more than sixty-five years also believed that he was sent of God."

Rev. F. J. Prettyman, D. D., Chaplain of the United States Senate, and former pastor of the family of Bishop Wilson, gave this estimate of his preaching before the Baltimore Conference:

"We may narrowly escape being presumptuous to mention the great constructive lines which were especially characteristic of his preaching. Some of these were: The essential unity of the Old and New Testament in the revelation of the will and purpose of God; the divine witness which is alone sufficient to attest a divine fact; the self-attesting power of revealed truth; the essential deity of Christ; who is the image of the invisible God; the fact and quality of Christ's personality as the value and merit of His work of atonement; the direct spiritual illumination of Paul which qualified him for the theological leadership of the church in all ages; the universal function of the church in transforming the world by the word of His truth; the absolute freedom of humanity in Jesus Christ. These at least indicate the general sphere of his preaching. With a voice of commanding quality of tone, and a presence of prophetic mold he delivered his message to a world whose only problem is sin and whose only Savior is Jesus Christ the Lord."

Hon. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, wrote several years ago of the effect one of Bishop Wilson's sermons had upon his life.

"One night twenty years ago hearing that Bishop Alpheus W. Wilson was to preach a mid-week sermon in a

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small Methodist Church in Raleigh, I made one of a congregation of less than one hundred which heard him preach the greatest sermon to which I have listened. After the passing of a fifth of a century that sermon remains with me still. It has helped me all the succeeding years."

At his funeral services in Trinity Church, Baltimore, which had been founded largely through his instrumentality, and with which he had been peculiarly identified for years, these tributes were paid to his marvelous power as a preacher.

Bishop Eugene R. Hendrix, senior Bishop of our Church.

"Was there ever a more devoted student of the word of God than Alpheus W. Wilson? Prepared by his scholarly training in early life, he formed the habit of reading God's Word in the original languages, especially the New Testament. It is said that he read it through entirely every few weeks. He thought in terms of the Greek Testament; especially did he explore the life of Paul. Was there ever such a Pauline preacher, such an interpreter of the Pauline mind? Was there ever one who expounded more fully Paul's great teachings? What a delight to hear him! He preached as some one has vitally described: 'It is not in circles that he preached, but in spirals: higher and higher he rose until he brought us to the cross and made us feel with him, 'For me to live is Christ.' He was a reader of many books, but his chief study was God's Word, and men everywhere accepted from his lips great expositions of God's truth. I doubt whether Methodism has ever had but one such a preacher—Stephen Olin. Alpheus W. Wilson was more generally known as an expositor, and noted as a preacher of the Gospel."

Bishop Earl Cranston, of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

"Sometimes we hear of a preacher that 'he was not at his best.' Never have I heard Bishop Wilson preach when

he was not at his best. I never knew him to lack in clearness of thought, in appropriateness of expression. I had almost said in completeness of logic, in clearness of faith, because that is an element in the proper presentation of the Scriptures. I have never known him to fail to do his best, such were his resources of mind with the great topics of gospel truth, such the very close communion of his soul with Christ, such his absolute reliance at all times upon the Holy Ghost. It never could be truthfully said: 'Well, the Bishop was not himself to-day.' He was a marvelous preacher, as Bishop Hendrix has well said."

Bishop Luther B. Wilson, of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

"I cannot forbear to pay my tribute to him as the mightiest preacher that it has ever been my privilege to hear, one who made as clear as crystal, and yet as glowing as the burning sun, the truth as it is in Jesus Christ—one so clear in all the purposes of his intellect, and of his faith, made it easy for one to follow him and climb up and see visions of open gates, and of the diademed Lord."

Rev. B. W. Bond, D. D., who had enjoyed a friendship of long standing with the Bishop:

"The preaching of Bishop Wilson was as unique as it was great. Utterly devoid as it was of any effort after elocutionary or rhetorical oratory, it nevertheless showed him to be one of the greatest masters of effective speech. While upon the platform and in the discussion of other subjects also, he wielded the weapons of debate with such readiness and effect that few cared to enter into combat with him, the pulpit was preeminently his throne of power. There the word, and the word alone, was his theme. His expositions of the Truth were always fresh. During fifty years I have heard him, at times at short intervals, but never without new and most instructive views presented by him. His sermons always seemed born of a deep, spiritual apprehension of the inner meaning of the Divine word, attained by few men, gained by constant meditation

and still more by constant communion with God. Massive yet penetrating, deep yet opening clearly new vistas of thought and revelation, he preached with 'logic on fire,' his whole being, mind and heart and spirit aglow with the glorious message of salvation with which he was commissioned by his Master, expressing himself, as he always did, in the choicest and most expressive language. He seemed as one of the old prophets declaring the counsel of Jehovah, yet breathing forth also an apostolic spirit of love; a modern John, beloved and loving, yet also of truth and righteousness."

Rev. John O. Willson, D. D., President of Lander College, who heard the sermon Bishop Wilson preached in Greenwood, S. C., shortly before his death, which was the last that ever fell from his lips.

"There is no question about the greatness of Bishop Wilson. He was the greatest preacher I ever heard or ever expect to hear, and I have heard many great preachers, and 'never a man spake like this man.' I trust the quotation is not sacrilegious. But he spake for his Lord, and spake like his Lord's servant, that wonderful Apostle to the Gentiles.

"I make no hesitation in saying that from the first sermon that I heard him preach in 1878, and all the sermons down, this sermon was the climax of them all. It seems to me now that that must have been his swan song, the sweetest of them all. All that profoundness of learning, all that clearness of vision, all that we never, never shall hear again. We sat there, the congregation of which I was a part, we sat there and listened and listened and listened and our hearts were fixed on better life in time to come and better service, and better admiration for this wonderful preacher. Oh, the pity of it—why didn't I know it was to be the last time, why didn't I have my stenographer there to take down those wonderful words—I could not take the tone, but I might have had the words. Oh, it is a pity, indeed, to think that that preaching will not be heard by us again."

CHAPTER X.

THE BISHOP AS A MAN: HIS MENTAL HABITS AND POWERS.

Bishop Wilson was known as a profound thinker and scholar throughout the Church. He was blessed with a high order of intellectual powers and was most diligent in their development and improvement. From his early years he held his mind to strict discipline and training and naturally formed studious habits which became more and more pronounced as he grew in years. He was a critical student to the time of his death. Besides his study of Hebrew, Greek and the Bible, not only in the English versions but in the original tongues, he read philosophy, science, history, biography, and theology. He was familiar with the fruits of modern scholarship, but never for a moment was his well grounded orthodoxy colored by the drifting opinions of what is popularly known as "advanced theology." He gave no little study to the world's religions and their comparative values, but gave his heart and his allegiance to the religion of Jesus Christ to which none of them can be compared. The human character and impotence of the one accentuates the divine character and strength of the other. The contrast reveals a firm foundation for the Christian faith.

His masterly mental grasp and retention of what he mastered made him one of the best equipped and readiest public speakers of the age. The wealth of his great mind made contribution to every sermon he

preached and every address he made. To the thoughtful, either in private or public speech, he was an overflowing fountain of knowledge and inspiration.

One of the reasons for his ripe scholarship was not only because he had a massive, well trained intellect, but because he had so wisely improved his time. He was never triflingly employed, but whether at home or abroad, on a railway train, a steamship, in a buggy crossing the country, or making his way in primitive fashion through Oriental lands, he generally had a book in his hand and was engrossed in study. Bishop Hoss in writing from Korea on the occasion of an official visit, to that land some years ago, said concerning him:

“When Bishop Wilson first visited the country, he made the trip back and forth in a chair, carried by four coolies, consuming two days each way. The tradition among the brethren is that he spent most of the time reading the Greek Testament; and I can well believe it. Lying down, or rising up, abiding at home or going abroad, on land or on sea, that Greek Testament has been his most constant companion ever since I first knew him. And what wonderful things he has managed to get out of it! Is there any one of his brethren left who will ever be able to sound its shoreless depths as he has done? While following even remotely in his footsteps, I cannot help feeling as if I were in the King’s highway.”

Lord Bacon in his essay entitled, “Of Studies” makes this observation, “Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, writing an exact man.” The impression generally prevails that though the Bishop was a great reader, and speaker, he was never given to writing. This is a mistake. During the

early part of his life he not only wrote many lengthy letters but also some of his sermons in full and carefully prepared many logical outlines. The author has before him one hundred and twenty-eight of the latter; seventy-eight of them are based upon texts in the Pauline Epistles and fifty upon texts from all other sources, showing the bent of his mind even in the early period of his ministry. It was not until his right hand was maimed in a railroad accident in his latter years that he was compelled to forego in a large measure the use of his pen. This injury coupled with his general aversion to writing, correcting, and revising stenographic reports of his sermons and lectures, has resulted in a serious loss to the theological world. The only products of his brain preserved in book form are the Cole Lectures for 1894 and 1910, entitled "The Witnesses to Christ," and "The Life and Mind of Saint Paul," respectively. These books have been so well wrought from the Scriptural material interpreted by the mind and heart of the author, and are so fundamental in character that time will only add to their permanent value.

As an illustration of the thoroughness with which he mastered a subject and the retention of the results of his investigations, a paragraph is quoted from a letter to a friend who had written to him in 1887, while he was at Kobe, Japan, expressing fear that the Revised Version of the New Testament which was then a burning subject before the people, might overthrow some cardinal doctrine.

This paragraph on Biblical inspiration written in the midst of his Episcopal duties in the East with no



TRINITY M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH, BALTIMORE, MD.

books of reference to consult shows a remarkable familiarity with the subject.

“The revision of the translation has really nothing to do with the question. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: but does that imply that their words would never be lost by the world’s negligence, or corrupted by the world’s sin? It rather seems to me that the preservation in their integrity and purity of the words spoken was one of the tests to which men were subjected—part of their trial to prove whether they, or any of them were worthy to become custodians of the truth of God and to reap its fruits. God did not propose to operate by a continuous and unending miracle for the perpetuation of the truth. In this, as in all other matters, He made the provision and put the responsibility of making it effective upon men. Nor was it ever claimed that the translators of the Bible were inspired, or their translation infallible. That would be to continue the miracle in another form. Good men, holy men used all the knowledge at their command to translate the Scriptures out of the original Greek and Hebrew into English. Wyclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, and others did marvelously good work in this line: but the Hebrew and Greek languages were not so well known by them as they are now: nor had the many manuscript copies and versions in other languages with which we are now familiar been discovered in their time. Their work was revised and improved by the translators of King James’ time, who gave us the version known as the authorized and used by the English speaking Church of God all over the world. That version was to its predecessors just what the late version is to it: and it met with the same sort of opposition and foolish comment and made its way very slowly. It was never authoritatively adopted by any church: and its only claims to the designation ‘authorized’ found on its title page—no, not found on its title page, but universally employed to distinguish it, is that it gradually won its way to universal acceptance and supplanted every other. To this day the Common Prayer Book of the English Church and the Protestant

Episcopal Church sets forth by authority another version. It was never pretended that the authorized version was a perfect translation, or that it always followed the best readings. It was simply the best available and contained all things necessary for eternal salvation. The revision is in many respects an improvement: but in not one item of our faith has it made the smallest change. The things proved from the authorized are equally proved from the revision. The appeal is still, as it always was, in disputed points to the original: and differences in understanding and interpretation will exist as long as men are fallible."

Contrary to popular belief, his great mind could take up small things and extract their real substance. There was formerly at Trinity a young ladies' missionary society called the Argosy. To this most of the girls of the church belonged. Once a year they held the usual open meeting, with refreshments and music, and set forth their small results and made the occasion a festivity. Several years he was asked to make a brief talk on these anniversaries. He never declined when well enough to speak. He would go, sit through the exercises, hearing about the fifty or sixty dollars gathered in with such pride, and then make a talk of a few minutes that would stir every girl present and make her desire earnestly to do more than her share in the Church's work for missions.

Every great scholar has some mental diversion. Bishop Wilson's was detective stories of the Sherlock Holmes type, and these he read with avidity. "The Three Musketeers" was one of his favorites, and the periodicals "Adventure" and the "Popular Magazine" were not strangers to him. This class of literature was not only restful to his mind after a study

of volumes of ponderous thought, but its psychological suggestiveness helped him in his thinking.

Bishop Wilson when at home lived chiefly in his study reading and thinking. The studious habits of a life time which yielded the fruits of such ripe and accurate scholarship, were not broken in his latter years of physical infirmity. In the midst of suffering his well-trained mind performed its functions with a force scarcely less than in the days of his fullest vigor, and grappled and mastered the great problems confronting the Church. He was a constant student. When for five months in 1908 he was so seriously ill, when there was scarcely a night when his mind did not temporarily wander, he read and mastered five volumes by such authors as Denney, Hort, Orr, and Swete—notwithstanding one third of Swete's work was in Greek with Latin footnotes. This showed the usual triumph of his mind over his bodily afflictions. During the last thirteen years of his life he read his Greek Testament through seventy-six times.

When over against his mental achievements is placed the fact that Bishop Wilson was never a robust man, that he suffered from various ailments, and as some one has well said, "dragged a weak and often a sickly body through his whole life," what he accomplished in the intellectual realm cannot be regarded as short of marvelous. He knew what it was to suffer prolonged spells of illness, and even to have his physicians inform him that death was not far away. But none of these things moved him. He met suffering with the patience and fortitude of a stoic but influenced by far loftier motives. He endured as seeing Him who is invisible. During one

of his spells of serious illness a member of his family said that if he knew that he would die that afternoon that knowledge would not even perceptibly quicken his pulses. Indeed, it is probable, had it been possible, he would have continued his thinking and studying to his last hour, as he had fully committed himself to God years ago, and was ready at any moment to obey the final summons. It is likely that at the beginning of the brief illness that terminated in his death he knew that the end was at hand; but his last hours with his family, ill as he was, were as calm and unruffled as if they had been a part of the ordinary course of his life.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BISHOP AS A MAN: HIS HOME LIFE AND SOCIAL QUALITIES.

Although Bishop Wilson was undemonstrative and reserved by nature yet within the sacred precincts of his home he relaxed and bestowed upon his family the treasures of his affection and love.

His marriage was the culmination of a romance which had its beginning in an old-fashioned experience meeting. On one occasion he visited a girls' class in company with an old preacher of the Puritan type who abjured the vanities of this sinful world, would not wear buttons on his coat, or sleep in a feather bed, or touch food prepared on Sunday. One of the girls had a feather in her hat or some ornament on her person. She was duly rebuked by the old man for her godless pride, and burst into tears. The heart of the chivalrous young preacher went out to the weeping girl, who four years later became his wife.

But he did not win her without great effort. For a long time he was kept in suspense regarding her answer. But he was a constant and persistent lover. He felt that in her word were wrapped up his success and happiness for all time.

As her home was in Baltimore, it was not unusual for him to make engagements that would lead to that city. But like Paul to whom he referred in this connection, his chief strength was in his epistles. His letters to her, though largely occupied with his ex-

periences concerning his work, usually closed with several sentences, which were the very quintessence of an effective appeal to the heart of a cultured young woman. Their number had a cumulative effect and accomplished the end he so ardently sought. It was an epoch in his life when she finally consented to become the sharer of the joys and sorrows of the young itinerant, and brought to him the wealth of her young womanhood.

Years afterward when on an official visit to the Orient, he sent this beautiful sentiment to the sweetheart of his youth on the occasion of the anniversary of two important events in her life, showing that time had but strengthened and matured the affection of his earlier days:

"Next Saturday is your birthday. Last Friday was the thirtieth anniversary of our marriage. I am not with you to do the honor and show the affection you so richly merit on either day. Absence does not affect the heart and the sentiment in this case. I think of all your love and care, your patience and suffering and thank God that you have been given to me and are still spared to me. I can never tell how much I owe to you. May our Heavenly Father reward you with all the good you deserve and make your life brighter and richer as the years go. Age can take nothing good from us. It will bring many consolations with it."

Again in a subsequent letter, he referred to her birthday after it had passed:

"I did not forget that yesterday was your birthday and was thinking of you all the day and wishing I could be with you and show you how glad I am that God has so long spared you to me. May He add many, many years yet to your life and make them abundant in blessing. You are not yet awake this Sunday morning. The hour

with you is 4:30 A. M. May the whole day be full of comfort, peace and blessing to you and the children."

These tender little attentions mean so much to a woman who keeps the fires of love and worship burning upon the altar of the home while her husband is far away.

Mrs. Wilson was a great comfort and strength to her husband through all the years of their wedded life. She often accompanied him on his long journeys to the mission fields of the Church, when as Bishop he made his official visitations. On one of these visits, the last in 1908 when Mrs. Wilson was with him, they went out of their way to India to ascend Kinchinjunga, one of the highest peaks of the Himalayas and of the world, the ascent of which had long been one of the Bishop's greatest desires. They reached the foot of the peak one night and were to make the ascent the next day. But on that morning Mrs. Wilson was taken ill and could not go. He did not leave her in care of some one and make the ascent without her as many men would have done under like conditions, but after having come that far, he cheerfully sacrificed a cherished hope of a life time and remained with her at the foot of the mountain. He never had another opportunity to climb the noted peak.

Her death in 1908 after their return from the Orient was a blow from which the Bishop never fully recovered. He silently bore his grief. Though there were few outward manifestations, his heart was rent and torn. What inexpressible pathos can be read between the lines of this part of a letter to his daughter, written from Montreal, June 22, 1908,

whither he had gone shortly after he had laid his loved one away:

"I sometimes feel that I acted selfishly in coming away and leaving you alone in the midst of associations and memories that cut me to the quick every hour. Yet, if I had remained I should have but added to your cares and aggravated your sorrows. I wanted you to recover yourself, because you have years of life before you and much to do. My course must be run in a few more years and my work is practically done. My colleagues and the church at large are generous and kindly and give me entire freedom in my life; but I have lost the spring from my movements and can hope to do but little more. The wound is deadly. Fifty-one years of such intimacy and vital oneness cannot be broken into and leave nature unimpaired."

For several years previous to her death, Mrs. Wilson had been a severe but an uncomplaining sufferer from a trouble that apparently arose from a trifling occurrence. About 1899 a small abrasion on a finger began to annoy her. Remedies suggested by her physician would help at first, but shortly lost effect. In 1902 pain set in which, in the following years, increased to agony. For hours every day she could only sit with eyes half-closed and endure the suffering. The least alleviation, however, would renew her sprightliness and energy. She never gave up her interest and labor in her Church. Her Sunday School class of young men, students at the colleges of Baltimore, was a joy always to her—and through them for years inquiries and affectionate reminders came from all over the Church. She spent Saturdays in study of the lesson; and would come home after Church service on Sunday with a vivid

account of the discussion held with her class. The pain always seemed to modify in time to allow her to do this work. But it *was* pain. It was treated with Roentgen ray; everything was tried that was known; but in 1905 surgery was resorted to, and two fingers removed. This seemed effectual, she was free from suffering, and while she minded the mutilation, no one ever heard a word of complaint from her lips, during the whole time.

In the fall of 1906, while at a missionary meeting in Winchester, Virginia, she had a bad fall; and from this her daughter dated the return of her disease. The Golden Wedding celebration was held March 4, 1907; the next day Bishop and Mrs. Wilson started for China, to share in the centenary of missions held that year. They were gone more than ten months. Mrs. Wilson's disease must have made rapid progress. Her letters showed all the time a longing to be home with her children. She was devotedly attached to her friends in China and Japan; enjoyed their society, loved their work, would write the smallest details of missionary life and talk, and found more and more spiritual intercourse opening with them. But she was homesick, and growing feebler all the time—though she stood the trip to the Ming Tombs, and the Great Wall in China, better than anyone else in her party.

They returned by India and Europe. She had begun to see her condition at that time and wrote from Ceylon that she feared she might be quarantined at Calcutta for bubonic plague, as she had some symptoms; but Dr. (now Bishop) Lambuth had said she must refer to him if she had any trouble.

Later on in their journeying, she said to Dr. Lambuth she felt she had her death warrant; but had no fear. On her arrival in Baltimore in January, 1908, she tried to persuade Bishop Wilson to tell their daughter what she feared—but he was like men mostly are—he couldn't bring himself to deal the blow—she had it to do herself. It was received as she had expected; and the only word that showed her endurance was strained too far, during all her suffering, came as she saw her daughter's grief—"I can't stand that!" in sharp tones. Another surgical operation in a day or two showed that the cancer had extended too far for more than prevention of some pain; her arm was removed and her family knew that her life was limited to a few months.

It was a strange period. Mrs. Wilson was able in a little while to move about, to go out, occasionally to visit friends, to walk, and was cheerful, even forgetful of the loss of her arm. She tried to learn to write with her left hand, so she could keep up correspondence with her husband. She was most courageous, never anticipating a future weakness. Her enjoyment of letters, attention from friends, her devotion to the Church at large, her details of the eastern tour, her estimate of the missionaries, and appreciation of all their kindness to her, was remarkable to her family, who understood that she could not long withstand the progress of the disease. Certainly it was a marvelous aid to them, as they bore their own grief and anxiety. In April there was the hint that the mind was not going to last as long as the body. Most remarkable at this stage was the evidence that her mind had been stayed on her

Saviour so long that she would know Him longer than any other. When the preachers whom she loved would come, they would go into her room and pray with her, and the words of prayer would quiet her nervous restlessness. The day before her death Rev. E. V. Regester, presiding elder of the Baltimore district and a former pastor, came and knelt beside her—his words were the last she ever heard of prayer on this side. Her husband tried once to pray with her; but the effort was so hard his daughter would not let him again make it. But his prayer was beautiful—"Thy child is suffering. Thou hast the power to heal; Thou didst heal those who were afflicted when Thou wast here on earth. If it be Thy will, touch her with that hand of love; allay the pain; and be here with her to the time when she shall pass into the land of joy and light." Such words as these would calm and soothe. One night she was overheard to say to herself "I reckon this is as easy a way to go to meet Jesus as any could be." Another time she had a fancy to have hymns sung. A favorite niece sang most of her hymns, and when those lines came—"When through the deep waters I call thee to go"—she pointed to the place of the missing arm and exclaimed "He has not let even this be too much for me!" She would say "I need not be anxious as to how I'll get along—my husband and my children cannot do too much for me—they will never get tired of helping me." Even in her utter break up her vagaries were interesting. Old war memories were tangled in with later events. The granddaughter was in a hospital part of this time; and it was touching to hear how Mrs. Wilson would try to

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spare this beloved child the news of her own illness. On one occasion she went to see the child. On the street cars was a man who had lost both arms, and wore a sign asking passengers and conductors to lend kindly aid. Mrs. Wilson remarked, "He is not so fortunate as I am, poor fellow!"

At last, June fourth, 1908, her spirit left the earth, which she had dearly loved, for the heaven which had been her goal since her conversion at sixteen—fifty-eight years. No one ever enjoyed life more than she did; and surely life eternal must be a wellspring of pleasure to her.

After a simple funeral service at her home conducted by Dr. Forrest J. Prettyman, Dr. B. W. Bond, and Revs. J. A. Anderson and E. V. Regester, all that was mortal of this saintly woman was laid to rest under many lovely flowers in Loudon Park to keep her three little boys company, who for years had been quietly sleeping after life's fitful fever.

Telegrams and letters of sympathy came from all over the country. A letter from Bishop Honda of the Methodist Church of Japan, in which the Japanese Bishop in beautiful simplicity expresses his sympathy in an unfamiliar language, has been selected from the many others and is given a place in this volume.

ARIMA, SETTSU. JAPAN. September 4, 1908.

"Bishop A. W. Wilson, D. D., LL. D., Baltimore.

"Dear Bishop Wilson,

"I am sorry that I did not know of Mrs. Wilson's removal to the higher world till the recent time. I sympathize with you from my heart. I don't know what shall I say. I have an experience that I lost my young

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companion, but there must be some difference with older people.

"I can suppose only you must be very lonely. Of course not as worldly man. The Father and the Lord will give you or be giving you much comfort.

"I came here yesterday to visit the mission conference, Bishop Ward presiding. Missionary Brother and sisters are doing well. Principal native preachers are here too. It is a good sight to have workers, foreign and native, so intimated. This is our characteristic among the missions in Japan. The united church is in encouraging condition. Several districts are engaging in second evangelistic campaign giving good records.

"Sincerely yours,

"Y. HONDA."

The memory of Mrs. Wilson's beautiful and saintly life has been a benediction to a host of people both in this country and in the Orient whose privilege it was to know her.

Bishop and Mrs. Wilson were blessed with six children—three boys and three girls. By a strange providence, the three boys died: the first in infancy July, 1859; the second, Norval, was born April, 1868, and died January, 1869; the third, Alpheus Waters, was born September, 1872, and died of smallpox February, 1873. The death of the Bishop's little namesake from this dread disease was particularly distressing. Mrs. Wilson, quarantined in the third story of the home, nursed the child till death claimed him. The three daughters survived their parents. They are Maybelle and Nina and Mrs. William L. Weber, all of whom live at the old home in Baltimore.

A study of Bishop Wilson's home life would be incomplete without at least a hint of his tenderness and love toward his eldest child, "May." From her

birth she was limited as to mental powers; but her loving disposition drew from her father the warmest devotion. He never failed to show her marked consideration, and welcomed her presence and attentions always with beautiful appreciation and courtesy.

The Bishop was happy in having a daughter, Nina, who from the time of her mother's death devoted her life to the care of her father, anticipating his every want and providing for his every comfort. A few days before his death, in the home of Bishop Denny, his life-long friend, he paid this tribute to her: "Nina is the best woman I ever knew. I have never seen any one so unselfish; and what she has been to me, no one will ever know, not even she herself." What a priceless legacy are these words which come as from the other world to her lonely heart!

In a description of his home and family, it seems fit to mention his cook, Kate Lear, who had lived with him about forty years. She was brought from Germany, her native country, when two years old. She possessed the best traits of her race. When the baby Alpheus was taken with smallpox, she was told she had better leave—as it was a terribly infectious disease. With the toss of her head which was always a characteristic, she replied "Mr. Wilson couldn't manage those three children and wait on Mrs. Wilson and the baby;" and she stayed—which was always deeply appreciated. Her relation to the family was always far above that of a servant. She was a friend, in their confidence, always interested in their affairs; the cooking for the failing appetite of Bishop Wilson required careful attention, and she watched over his coffee and general diet with special

care—though in later years the cooking for the rest might not always have been perfect. He never rebuked or found fault with her; nor did she stand at all in awe of him; she did not hesitate to contradict him, when she pleased, and the only notice of this would be an amused twinkle of his eyes! One of her best qualities was her unfailing patience and tenderness toward his oldest daughter; a kindness which was never forgotten. She saw almost the last minutes of Bishop and Mrs. Wilson; and went to their burials with their children. Few people can claim so long and close service from a domestic; and it is perhaps another significant fact in characterizing his life that the atmosphere of his home would hold such a woman that long.

There was something magnetic about the Bishop in spite of his reserve. His little girls always clung to him with peculiar affection, and among his devoted friends were several poor and ignorant women—one a laundress, a member of his church in Washington. At Wesley Grove, after a night service, when he had exhorted powerfully, a poor laboring man was suddenly converted, and rushed up into the pulpit and flung himself on Bishop Wilson's breast sobbing with joy.

His cultivated tastes, and interest in what are called the fine arts, made him an agreeable companion for people who could enjoy worldly advantages. He took great pleasure in collecting such little mementos of his travels as were within his reach; and his house was in a modest way a museum of foreign curios. He had a story of how he got each; where he bought it, what kind of dealer sold and chattered, or what

materials it was made of. One year he took pleasure in bringing silks home to his daughters and nieces; not that they were more beautiful than could have been bought at home, but they were oriental—and therefore had a special charm, as woven in strange looms in foreign countries. Pictures, pottery, silks, ivory, all suggestions of strange quarters of the earth, and stranger peoples, were deeply interesting to him; and in late years he would say “I should like to see Australia; I have seen all the other quarters of the earth.” In 1907, his last journey to China, with his wife he made a second trip to the Ming Tombs and the Great Wall; and wrote how well they two, his wife and himself, at seventy-three stood that excessively rough, severe travel.

Bishop Wilson did not have many visitors. Preachers and laymen who would have considered it an honor to visit him refrained from doing so because they thought that he preferred seclusion. He lived chiefly to himself and in association with the master minds of ancient and modern times, by means of his carefully selected books. He is remembered by the inner circle of his friends who were privileged to see him in his study, as clad in a dressing gown and slippers, and sitting in a comfortable, reclining chair, his feet upon a high leather-cushioned footrest, with his Greek Testament open before him on a reading stand. A large meerschaum pipe, which the Bishop would slowly smoke when talking to his visitors, was generally within convenient reach. There was a period in his life when he abjured the use of tobacco, but after a time he resumed smoking which seemed to be quite a comfort to him in his latter years.



CENTRAL M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH, BALTIMORE, MD.

There was no atmosphere of conscious superiority about Bishop Wilson. Though not without a certain knowledge of his powers and gifts, he was simple in life and like many other great men was not without humility.

As Bishop Denny aptly expresses it

“He did not strain himself nor pose; he was just quietly natural. He did not presume upon his gifts, his attainments, or his position. He was a tremendous personality, and did not seem to know that palpable fact. . . He was modest, and, except when his responsibilities demanded, he was not self-assertive; but he was not abashed in any earthly presence, and no man could have made him cower.”

He had never aspired to popularity in the social circle and cared little to be known as a good mixer, for he felt there was something better. When a young preacher he gave his undivided energies to the mastery of the art of preaching rather than the development of what he conceived to be his poor conversational gifts. The product was a great preacher rather than a past-master of men of the anecdotal type.

Rev. H. W. Kinzer, a superannuate of the Baltimore Conference, has published an account of an incident in the Baltimore *Southern Methodist*, which occurred when he was junior preacher and Dr. A. W. Wilson was his presiding elder, and which shows the value the Bishop placed upon preaching at the beginning of his ministry, and incidentally reveals the interest he had in his younger brethren.

Rev. H. W. Kinzer's interesting story is as follows:

ALPHEUS W. WILSON

"Bishop A. W. Wilson was my first presiding elder in the Baltimore Conference.

"At the Conference held in Salem, Va., where I joined, in 1871, which was presided over by Bishop Pierce, I was sent as junior preacher to Piedmont Circuit, now called Marshall Circuit, and Dr. Alpheus W. Wilson was made presiding elder of the Washington District.

"I remember an amusing incident that occurred at the first quarterly conference of my second year on that circuit.

"Under the head of Miscellaneous Business, Dr. Wilson inquired if any provision had been made for a home for the junior preacher?

"One brother after another responded by saying: 'Brother Kinzer is welcome to my home any time he may choose to come and stay as long as he pleases.' Dr. Wilson said: 'That is very generous, and kind, brethren, but a junior preacher needs some place where he can keep his trunk and books and prepare his sermons; and can think of it as his home. When I was a junior preacher I had no home, but was expected to keep going around among the people and I soon found that I had to decide between two things—either to gain the reputation of being considered sociable at the cost of making a preacher, or trying to make a preacher of myself at the cost of being thought unsocial. I chose the latter, and so got the reputation of being very unsocial.'

"Instantly, an old brother present, who was affectionately known among his brethren and friends on the circuit as 'Bishop' Diggs, because of his devotion to the church and its ministry, said in a clear, strong voice, without meaning the slightest discourtesy: 'You've got it yet, sir!' The brethren broke out in hearty laughter, but Dr. Wilson gave no sign that he had heard it.

"There were those who thought him cold and lacking in sympathy, but it was not so. No man ever had a warmer or more sympathetic heart than Bishop Wilson—when you reached it.

"At the end of my second year on that circuit, when he came to our fourth quarterly meeting, he and I were taking a walk when he greatly surprised me by saying: 'Brother

Kinzer, do you wish a married man's appointment at Conference?' He had seen some things that gave him a lurking suspicion that I was contemplating an early marriage. I said to him: 'I have only been in the Conference two years (though I had doubled my work on the Conference course, which we were allowed to do at that time, and expected to be ordained elder at the approaching Conference) and feel that I scarcely have a right to ask for or expect a married man's appointment. You can send me where you please, and if Providence should open the way for me to marry during the coming year, I may do so.' Here he showed a delicate and tender sympathy and a knowledge that he knew how to understand and appreciate the secret springs of a brother's heart."

Bishop Wilson carried with him all through life a painful consciousness that he lacked the facility for happily expressing himself when occasion required the language of the heart rather than that of the head. That consciousness embarrassed him, and was chiefly responsible for his not having cultivated the habit of mingling more largely with the people socially. He often referred to this source of embarrassment in his letters.

Excerpts from two are given—one written near the beginning of his ministry and the other near the end. In a letter from Elk Ridge, October 18, 1856, he wrote:

"Destitute of conversational power, and equally wanting in epistolary talent, topics that would expand in other hands into agreeable and interesting communications, or pleasant chit-chat, are disposed of by me in two, or three concise, dull sentences, awakening no pleasurable emotions and attracting no attention. . . . I would like, if I had the time, to try to acquire the art of making myself agreeable. But the pursuit of the various departments of study required in my vocation, comprising the

ALPHEUS W WILSON

abstruse investigation of metaphysical theories, the various branches of widely-extended literary criticism and numberless other matters altogether without the range of topics of general interest, is not at all favorable to and leaves but little time for the cultivation of the more familiar art. In addition to this I am too largely defective in the qualities essential to a conversationalist, and letter-writer-imagination and fancy to admit of success in either department. So, if any one makes inquiry of you, why I am so silent and reserved, as is often done here, you may give this as the exposition of the matter.

"There is, however, one topic upon which I find that I excite interest whenever I am called to allude to it in conversation—that is, religion, with all that appertains to it, comprising the faith, experience and practice of the Christian life. I often find myself in company with Christians—sometimes indeed with the irreligious—earnestly enforcing some point of Scriptural doctrine, experience, or conduct; dwelling upon my own past experience, or dilating upon the prospect of the Redeemed; while all are apparently intently fixed upon the theme and deeply interested in it. Why it is, I know not. Certainly not because of the talent displayed in the elucidation of such subjects. Rather I should attribute it to the inherent interest of the subjects and the earnestness inseparably connected with their discussion in my case. Hence it is my endeavor to carry into the pulpit the same topics. And when I can succeed in this endeavor I find always more earnest attention and more generally awakened interest on the part of my congregation."

The other is dated May 4, 1900, and was written from Louisville, Ky., and shows that after long years this obsession of his youth still held its place in his mind.

"It is always a pleasure to receive expressions of affection from those whom we love, even though we be thoroughly assured of our place in their hearts, without any formal utterance. It is, perhaps, the misfortune of

many of us—constituted like myself—that we can take and appreciate such expressions more readily than we can return them. I have constantly regretted all my life that I was so dumb and unresponsive when occasion and my own heart alike demanded recognition of love and service of which I was consciously unworthy. The highest authority has said that ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ It is, of course, true in the region to which the saying is more immediately applicable. But in the relations of our common life it is quite as often true that the full heart can find no utterance.”

Though the Bishop’s social qualities were not regarded generally as his largest asset, those who were fortunate enough to win his confidence and friendship found him delightful company. Bishop Warren A. Candler, in speaking of this side of his nature, said:

“As may not have been known to some, he was a most charming man in the social circle, provided it was not a circle filled with frivolity and the frivolous. He had no gift for small talk, and was mighty poor company for light-headed people; but in a circle in which intelligence and piety prevailed, he was mighty good company. Lovable, genial, and brotherly, and withal possessing a delightful and delicate humor, he was a man with whom a sensible person could spend a day without taking account of the hours.”

Bishop E. E. Hoss in this connection has said:

“There used to be a current report in the Church that he was a man of somewhat chilly and repellent manner. But nothing could have been less true. While he was not garrulous nor given to adulation he was a most genial companion. He loved to be loved, and he gave himself most unreservedly to his friends. I count it among the great honors of my life that for many years I was so sure of his good will towards me that I could approach him

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directly on any subject. There was never a cloud nor a mist between us. When we parted for the last time, only a few weeks before his death, I felt that the kiss which he left upon my lips was nothing less than the sealing of our friendship for eternity."

Bishop Collins Denny, who, on account of his intimate relation to Bishop Wilson, knew his heart as few men knew it, has expressed his deeply rooted convictions in these words:

"Bishop Wilson was misunderstood by some of our people. He was by no means hard to approach; but every strong man in a responsible position is open to such misapprehensions. The same misapprehensions are likely to exist concerning every strong Bishop of the Church. No man who had any matter of moment to bring to the attention of Bishop Wilson ever found him difficult to approach. He was as easy to approach as any man I ever knew, as attentive to what one said, and as ready to give all that was in him for worthy ends.

"I am not so patient as perhaps I should be when I hear of suggestions that Bishop Wilson was imperialistic and severe. He was a Christian gentleman who loved God and his fellowmen. He did not carry his heart on his sleeve, nor did he waste his sympathy, but when the call came he held back nothing of his great nature, nothing of his tenderness. He was more nearly a father to me than was any man after the death of my own father. He was with me in my sorrows, and I was with him in some of the many sorrows he had to bear. To the suffering he was tender. He was glad to receive sympathy, yet he took his own troubles to God, bowing submissively under the heavy rod and making no outcry."

Though he enjoyed the conversation most when it moved on a high intellectual plane, he was not averse to a bit of pleasantry now and then, and was never at a disadvantage in repartee. It is scarcely

necessary to say that in repartee and in every walk of life he was always a high-minded Christian gentleman. During the early part of his ministry, when his future as a preacher did not seem to be very promising, an older colleague advised him to give up the ministry and enter some other calling, adding in a spirit in which seriousness and pleasantry were mingled. "You will never learn to preach." The young preacher retorted in the same spirit: "When I have preached as long as you and can't preach any better, I'll try something else." The older preacher lived to see the man whom he had chided a bishop and one of the greatest preachers of his day, and to receive an appointment from him. He had no patience with light, trifling conversation. His calmness which nothing could disturb, and his ready wit, often served him well in presiding over Annual Conferences. It is currently reported that in a Conference down South a preacher who had made a record for placing stumbling-blocks in the way of presiding bishops arose and made this suggestion: "Mr. President, you have been a bishop for twenty-odd years, and this is your first visit here. You will probably never return. So, if you wish to be remembered among us and erect for yourself a living monument I would suggest that you send me to the ————District." The Bishop pulled his venerable beard once or twice and remarked: "Brother, I thank you for your kindly suggestion, but I have no desire for monuments of brass."

His closing years were marked by a mellowness and sweetness of spirit that threw a charm about him and made it a benediction to be in his presence.

On account of his official position the author saw perhaps more of the Bishop during the last three years of his life than any one else outside of his family. More than once when he had left the Bishop's study he felt that he had been in a hallowed place and in a holy atmosphere and went forth into the world with a consciousness of a stronger grip on unseen things.

CHAPTER XII.

HONORS AND UNOFFICIAL EVENTS.

A mention of the honors denoting scholarship and a brief record of the unofficial events in the life of Bishop Wilson may not be without interest to the readers of this book.

He never sought or placed great value upon honorary adornments from literary institutions, for he knew that many titles were bestowed without proper discrimination, resulting in the impairment of the significance of such degrees so far as scholarly habits and lofty attainments are concerned. If a man is without ability, honorary degrees are generally a hindrance rather than a help. One of his contemporaries told the author that soon after Rev. A. W. Wilson received the degree of Doctor of Divinity, one of his friends facetiously asked him the meaning of D. D.

"Double Dunce," was his immediate reply.

Universities and colleges have been quick to recognize the truth, however, that they have honored themselves by honoring him. The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by Randolph-Macon College in 1875, and a like degree by Victoria University of Toronto in 1911, during the meeting of the Ecumenical Conference in that Canadian city.

Concerning the elaborate ceremonies attendant upon the bestowal of this and other degrees he wrote a very entertaining account. There were about ten persons who were to be thus complimented on the evening of the Commencement, and each was ex-

pected to make a five-minute speech setting forth his fitness for the honor. The Bishop wrote that in view of the number of candidates such a thing was "no small strain upon the audience." The imagination is powerless to fancy Bishop Wilson making that sort of speech. He could not laud himself; it was not in him. But his remarks had an attractiveness that was peculiar to himself.

The degree of Doctor of Law was conferred upon him by Central College of Missouri, and by Washington and Lee University; by the former in 1884 and by the latter in 1885.

He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Randolph-Macon College from 1871 to the time of his death in 1916, and was President of the Board from 1882 to 1896. He was elected a trustee of the American University in 1891, and a year later was made Vice-Chancellor, which office he held to the time of his death.

There were but few noteworthy events in Bishop Wilson's unofficial life, but the few are too important to be omitted from this study. As was stated in a previous chapter he cared little for social life and preferred the quiet of his home with his books and wife and children. During his last twenty years even the simple spending of an evening with friends meant a sleepless night and prostration the next day. When he reached the fortieth anniversary of his marriage, however, he was in far better condition than Mrs. Wilson expected, and he thought that the occasion should be celebrated; so he invited his Baltimore friends to spend the evening with him and

it proved so bright and cheerful an event that he said, "I mean to celebrate my Golden Wedding."

When that time had arrived, March 4, 1907, many changes had taken place. Of the friends who had been present ten years previously, thirty had preceded them over Jordan's dark and stormy flood. That made a difference; they began to feel lonely, since few old friends were left. Mrs. Wilson's health was poor, and Bishop Wilson had gone through many severe illnesses. They were no longer strong enough to carry through the arrangements, which were necessarily left in the hands of their daughter. This led the Bishop to say several times when he was questioned about plans, "Nina knows—it is Nina's Golden Wedding," which jest he always repeated with quiet enjoyment when that celebration was referred to. But the completion of half a century of married life is no small event; and though many dear faces were absent, and though the Bishop and Mrs. Wilson were not unconscious of their own advancing years, they got much pleasure out of the event. Their friends, mostly of a younger generation, were truly kind and thoughtful. The house was filled with flowers; gifts poured in—of all sorts—silver, gold, porcelain, glass; the preachers sent a purse of gold, and several friends sent their congratulations in the form of poems. The Bishops sent a gold-lined silver bowl which was a highly appreciated treasure. The marriage had been according to the pretty old-fashioned custom; four bridesmaids and four grooms-men, with the bride's father to perform the ceremony in his own parlor, and as many friends as possible to witness it. Two bridesmaids were present on the

anniversary, Bishop Wilson's sister Augusta, and Mrs. Wilson's sister Mary, now Mrs. Thomas Fitzgerald. Another still living was prevented from being with them. The Rev. P. D. Lipscomb, his wife and all the groomsmen Rev J. Newman Hank, Rev. B. Peyton Brown, Rev. Theodore M. Carson, and Rev. E. H. Wilson had long been dead.

Bishop Wilson looked well and enjoyed the evening, even though it was evident he often thought of friends whom he would naturally have expected to see had they not been in the world of spirits. It was more a season of reminiscence to him than a social hour. Mrs. Wilson was already ill, though not definitely aware of it; she looked very white and frail, but made a brave effort not to show how she felt. It seemed like a brilliant sunset hour, before the twilight and night came on. The next morning they started for San Francisco, and thence they sailed in a few days for China, the last earthly journey they ever took together.

In Bishop Wilson's family, birthdays were always marked, generally by gifts and a special dinner—anything to add brightness to the idea that each member had added something to the world by coming. His birthday, February fifth, was always celebrated. For several years it was Mrs. Wilson's pleasure to invite the preachers of his Church residing in Baltimore to spend the evening with him. The talk on such occasions was good to hear; a group of Methodist ministers always have something to say and at such times are at their best. The family enjoyed these functions highly. On one of these occasions the brethren decided to mark the day by a

present. A set of beautiful plates was chosen, and the late Rev. Dr. J. H. DuLaney was selected to present them. He made a charming little speech and ended by giving the plates to Mrs. Wilson, to the great amusement of all, because as he said she was the housekeeper.

Another time the brethren asked Bishop Wilson to celebrate his birthday by giving them a series of studies in Romans. This was much to his taste, and on his birthday, and on a day for several successive weeks a number of ministers gathered in his study and he talked on each occasion for an hour or so, encouraging interruptions in the shape of questions and arguments. He enjoyed the hours very much, and doubtless the ministers present found them exceedingly profitable. But each succeeding year found him weaker physically. He grew too feeble to go downstairs regularly to meals; and after while only a dinner party for the family living in the city celebrated the day, but he liked it to be held, even when he was not at the table.

When the eightieth birthday approached, the pastor of the family, Rev. John Paul Tyler, conceived the idea of making it a general celebration. Mr. Tyler spared no pains to make a suitable observance, and it developed into a beautiful occasion. Trinity Church was decorated, and at eight o'clock a reception was held, attended by the preachers of the three Methodisms in Baltimore, and by personal friends from Washington and Virginia. Refreshments were served, and speeches were delivered. Among others Bishops Denny and Kilgo who had come to Baltimore expressly for the occasion, paid deserved

tributes to their colleague; Dr. Tagg of the Methodist Protestant Church, and Dr. St. Clair Neal of the Methodist Episcopal Church, made addresses and Revs. E. V. Regester and F. J. Prettyman of his own Church gave delightful talks on Bishop Wilson's work and personal relation to the men of his former Conference. It was a gathering the like of which is rarely seen, and gave great pleasure to Bishop Wilson. Letters and telegrams had poured in all during the day; too many in number to repeat here. But one telegram deserves to be preserved, on account of the reference to his father.

"WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA, February 5, 1914.

"Bishop Alpheus W. Wilson.

"Allow me to present you my congratulations upon your eightieth birthday. My father, who knew and loved your father, joins me in good wishes. In Winchester where your father lived and labored so many years his name is always associated with yours; indeed, I may say that the memory of his saintly life somewhat overshadows the achievements of his son. This is not displeasing to you. I am sure, today, when the Churches are celebrating your birthday you will be glad to know that an old friend in Winchester has placed a little spray of blossoms on his grave.

WM. G. HARDY "

This reference to his father, whom he deeply revered and loved, was most prized by Bishop Wilson, who always said his father was a magnificent preacher, to whose sermons his own did not compare.

Bishop Wilson enjoyed this celebration greatly, but said if he had known it was contemplated, he would not have allowed it. "Such things should never be said of a man until he is dead!" was his remark, when it was over.

In October, 1915, during the pastorate of Rev. Joseph H. Balthis, the half-century of Trinity Church was observed. As the edifice had been built chiefly through the efforts of Bishop Wilson, and as he had been the Church's first pastor, he was glad to take part in the celebration. Four services were held during the week beginning Sunday, October 24, when he preached the semi-centennial sermon. A banquet was held one evening in the basement of the church, at which a prayer of thanksgiving for Trinity's work was offered by Rev. I. W. Canter, D. D., one of our veteran ministers, and speeches were made on different departments of the church by the members of Trinity, and by the few who could recall the organization of the Church. Bishop Wilson's talk was necessarily brief, but it abounded in facts relating to Trinity's history. In fifteen minutes he reviewed the inception and development of Trinity; what it had done as a Church to help the Churches of the South, which had been wrecked by the war; and what the early membership had striven against and overcome. An historical paper recalling the important happenings in the Church's life, prepared by the pastor, was one of the features of the program. Another evening of the same week Bishop Wilson made a more formal speech, on the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, its formation, and the conditions under which it originated in Baltimore. The Rev. Forrest J. Prettyman, D. D., a former pastor of the Church, and Honorable Josephus Daniels, the Secretary of the Navy, a warm friend of Bishop Wilson, were also speakers of the evening; and by the law of association of ideas their remarks had a trend of

eulogy in relation to the Bishop. But it was not strange, for the life of Bishop Wilson had so colored that of Trinity that it was difficult to speak of one without the other.

On July 2, 1889, Bishop Wilson met with the only accident of all his travels. He was returning from Dalton, Georgia, and it was raining heavily. A culvert on the Norfolk and Western Railroad, near Thaxton, Virginia, which was reached about two o'clock in the morning, had been washed away, and the train fell through. The car in which he was sleeping broke in half, the rear half hanging over the gully, while the front end went down. Five passengers were killed. Bishop Wilson woke suddenly with the consciousness of falling but did not feel the impact of the fall. Mrs. Wilson was always fond of associating the fact of his not having been killed with the scripture, "He shall give his angels charge over thee." The train caught fire, and the usual horror of such an accident was added to this disaster. In the dark he could not see the extent of the wreck; he crawled out of the debris, lay quietly in the mud and rain all night, but escaped any serious injury. He must have struck his hip, for it was so deeply bruised that a large carbuncle formed during the following month. In the early morning, a relief train carried him with the other survivors back to Roanoke. When he went into the hotel lobby, he was so covered with mud, that a friend standing by did not recognize him.

Dr. Collins Denny, then stationed at Salem, was sent for, and accompanied him home the next day. His right hand had a large splinter about the size of a



ST. JOHN'S EMMANUEL M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH, BALTIMORE, MD.

match, run through the palm. This had to be removed, and as the process promised to be painful chloroform was suggested, but he declined anything in the shape of an anodyne saying, "If I can have a good cigar, I'll not be a trouble to the doctor." He bore the cutting and the sewing with an occasional wincing. He never wrote with ease afterward; and the hand grew more and more stiff, so that letters were reduced to the shortest possible length. It was remarkable, however, how well he came off, in such a catastrophe. Frail as he was he might have had pneumonia from exposure in the rain, but he escaped and not even a bone was broken.

He lost all his clothing, and a dearly prized Greek Testament, given him about 1870 by his old friend Dr. J. Asbury Morgan. These two used to meet every Tuesday night for years at each other's house, to read the Greek; and it was likely that Bishop Wilson's habit of reading his Greek Testament regularly, four chapters daily, began in this custom. He lost his watch also, which was replaced by some of his brethren of the Baltimore Conference, and some other personal belongings. It seemed for years he would recollect and want something "lost at Thaxton." Though he had suffered the loss of some prized belongings his was a remarkable deliverance, which did not fail to fill him with gratitude for his preservation.

In 1901, the first great missionary conference of his Church was held in New Orleans. Bishop Wilson, with Mrs. Wilson, had arrived at San Francisco from a visit to China, just in time to make the journey to New Orleans. The bubonic plague had

broken out in the Chinese quarter of San Francisco, and Texas had quarantined against that city. Not knowing this, Bishop and Mrs. Wilson secured their tickets and started for New Orleans. At the Texas border as they had no physician's certificate, they were turned back. They decided to go to St. Louis, and see if they could reach New Orleans that way. They found that route practicable, but the Bishop was late and missed his part on the program. After a warm reception from the whole Conference, somebody asked if he had heard that the train on which he had reached the Texas border had been wrecked, and nearly a hundred people killed? He had not heard it, but realized anew what he had always felt, that God had him in His keeping.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FALL OF THE EARTHLY TEMPLE.

And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.—*The Tempest.*

As the clock in his study struck eight on Tuesday morning, November 21, 1916, the tired heart of Alpheus Waters Wilson stood still and the work of his massive intellect was at an earthly end. Thus passed to the heavenly world from the room in which his profoundest thinking had been done, a man who for years had been a colossal figure in American Methodism and who is considered by many competent judges to have been the greatest preacher of his generation.

No one, least of all himself, ever thought that he would reach the ripe old age of more than four-score years, for his health had not been good from his boyhood. Two young sisters died of tuberculosis of the lungs; and his father, Rev. Norval Wilson, had a siege of hemorrhages lasting about five years. The lung healed, but he was never robust again.

Bishop Wilson was subject to heavy colds, frequently resulting in bronchitis; and even before definite mischief developed, he had to struggle against weakness and languor. After preaching he was always prostrated; unable to eat for hours, and rarely able to sleep at night. In 1864 he went north

for a change, and consulted a physician in New York, who assured him his lungs were in a critical condition, and gave him slight hope of a long life, even if he could use the care necessary. In 1869, he had an attack of pneumonia; and while he seemed to recover, it is from that time that the condition of his last twelve years dates. His nerves also seemed involved; and he was one who quickly developed ailments now called infections. Pain of exquisite nature usually attended his illness. And it was during such trials that, to his family, his lofty character showed its deeply religious quality most intensely. One or two special sieges stand out; in 1884 he had an attack of typhoid malaria; after which inflammation of periosteum set in—anguish so intense that opiates and narcotics failed entirely, and there was a period of eight or nine weeks when loss of sleep from suffering caused delirium. It is no small mark of self-control that not one word of impatience or irritability was ever heard from him during those seven long months of illness and pain.

For the four years he served the Board of Missions, and part of the first decade after he was elected Bishop, he seemed to improve, from constant change of air and scene. But soon his old tendencies began to show themselves again. His was a busy life. He had no time to be sick. But time after time on the eve of important engagements he was too ill to meet them. He fought against it; would often go when unable to do so; once in answer to a remonstrance from his daughter he said, "It would be worth while to die, if that is the result, for my Master's work." He could brace himself up tremen-

dously at times, for a short while. More than once he preached while suffering untold agony; and would say afterwards, "It was worth the pain." He did not like to admit that he was ill; always made light of it to outsiders, and only his family knew how intense was the pain he bore, in most of the illnesses that afflicted him.

Bronchitis nearly always came, once a year, from about 1894 to the year of his death. His various other ailments began about that time to appear more frequently—ten times he had erysipelas. He was twice extremely ill in China, and during the last visit to Japan in 1908 he was extremely ill several times. The death of Mrs. Wilson after her long illness had a serious effect on him, and the next year, beginning in January, 1909, came the long attack with what the X-ray showed to be a pinched nerve. The exhaustion from long pain, with prostration for want of sleep and inability to eat, apparently roused the affected lung into activity; and from that time Bishop Wilson's life seemed hung by a thread. He never recuperated, for more than two or three weeks. His weakness was excessive. The least exertion of hand or arms aggravated the asthma, and often he was too feeble to feed himself! Think of a man in that state of prostration still traveling! He felt his work a solemn call, loved it, loved to preach, and to meet his brethren, and made strenuous effort to go whenever there was a duty to be performed. Twice in the last ten years of his life he went to the railroad station and came home because he realized that his condition was such he could not improve in time to do the work demanded of him. He felt very keenly

this inability; but took great pleasure in the assurance of his colleagues that they would gladly assist him and take care of him whenever he could manage to get to their meetings or to his Conferences. More kindness and attention from the Bishops, one and all, could not have been given. Indeed, friends all over the Church lavished most tender love and kindness upon him in these attacks so frequent when away from home.

While the failure was gradual, it was definite through the years from 1909 to 1914. But from the summer of 1914 it was more marked. He counted on the summers north for many years to find vigor and strength, but when 1915 came, he found he could not leave home; the service of his daughter could not be dispensed with. The next year, 1916, both winter and summer he had fewer acute attacks; but notwithstanding he steadily lost ground. In August he met at Tate Springs the Commission on Federation to complete the number. He had arranged to go to Lake Junaluska from there, but was not able. He came home, deeply depressed, which was unusual with him; and said "I wish I had not been placed on the Commission. I am not able to do the work. But I felt I could not refuse, I have never refused to do anything my Church has laid on me." His feelings never changed; he must have had a forecast of the end.

In October he went to Salisbury, Maryland, to visit a close friend. He preached on the Sunday; but was not strong enough to leave his room more than twice or thrice afterwards. Yet he left home

nine days later, and was away four weeks, returning only in time to die.

From October 26-28 he was with his colleagues in their fall meeting in Atlanta. From Atlanta he went to Birmingham and spent several days with friends. From November 1-6 in response to a pressing invitation, he was with Bishop Denny at the North Alabama Conference, where he made the address to the class admitted into full connection, and on Sunday morning preached a great sermon at the Highlands Church, Birmingham.

From Birmingham he journeyed to Greenwood, South Carolina, where he enjoyed a week with his friends of long standing, Dr. and Mrs. John O. Willson, at Lander College. On Sunday, October 12, he preached his last sermon on earth in the church at Greenwood. The next day he went to Richmond to be present by invitation at the sessions of the Virginia Conference. Bishop Kilgo, the president of the Conference, and he were fellow guests of Mrs. Collins Denny, Bishop Denny being absent on episcopal duties. He told Mrs. Denny he had been sick in the night on the train. She put him to bed and ministered to him, not thinking him worse than she had seen him many times.

He quickly rallied and attended the Conference until Saturday at noon November 18, when he became too ill for further attendance and for the special service he had promised to render. The last hymn he ever heard was one of the old songs of Zion which speak with irresistible power to the soul that is in constant communion with God. It was sung on that Saturday morning at the close of the morning ses-

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sion of the Conference, and was prophetically significant in its relation to Bishop Wilson, for in the language of Bishop Kilgo, "the heavenly hosts were invisibly gathered around him." It was Bishop Marvin's favorite:

My latest sun is sinking fast,
My race is nearly run,
My strongest trials now are past,
My triumph is begun.
O come, angel band, come and around me stand;
O bear me away on your snowy wings to my immortal
home.

The details of the Bishop's last week on earth are given in a personal letter to Miss Nina Wilson from Bishop Denny's daughter, Mrs. Edith White, the wife of Rev. Roscoe White. The author takes the liberty of publishing this letter, warm with sympathy and love, which was written in the shadow of the great sorrow, for he knows that the many friends of the late Bishop are eager to know everything that took place in his last not-uneventful week.

"RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, Tuesday, Nov. 21, 1916.

"Dear Miss Nina:

How my heart goes out to you in a great sympathy, and how little able I feel equal to writing you what I should like to say. I loved Bishop Wilson as I loved my own dear grandfather, his presence in our home these past few days has been a benediction, and it has been our dear delight to wait on him. I thought it might be a comfort to you for me to write you some of the details of his stay with us; when I put myself in your place it is what I should like.

"He reached here Tuesday morning and spent the day upstairs in his own room. He did not seem very exhausted after his trip, and as always was interested in the

family news we had to tell him. He came down stairs for dinner Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights, and after dinner would sit for a while in the library with us. About ten thirty every morning Dr. Potts came by for him in a machine and he went to Conference. Friday night Governor Stuart and Judge Kelly were here for dinner. Bishop Wilson talked of a number of Church matters. The guests did not stay very late, and Bishop Wilson went right up stairs after they left. Shortly after that I had to go up to put Denny in bed and I went into Bishop Wilson's room to see what I could do for him. He seemed to be having more difficulty than usual in getting his breath, and told me, for the first time in a month he had just taken a dose of morphine. I got him some water. I recollect now, it was Saturday night he took the medicine, for we sent for Dr. Harrison. Dr. Harrison said it would not be wise for Bishop Wilson to try to preach Sunday morning. Bishop Wilson went to Conference Saturday morning, but he did not come down to dinner Saturday evening. In fact, I think he did not come down again until he left.

"Bishop Wilson seemed so appreciative of the least little thing we would do for him. Saturday morning before he went to Conference I put on and laced up his shoes for him, and he told me then he was having more difficulty than usual in getting his breath. His room communicated with Bishop Kilgo's room, and Bishop Kilgo and Roscoe helped him every morning and evening. When Bishop Kilgo came down to breakfast Sunday morning, he told us that Bishop Wilson was not so well. I took his breakfast up each morning. Monday morning he said he did not feel equal to eating much, but for me to butter him a biscuit. I did that for him. Then he told me I might butter the other two biscuits and put them in his overcoat pocket, that he would eat them on the train for lunch before reaching Baltimore. I wanted to prepare a regular lunch but he said he did not care for it; he said: 'If I take the biscuit that will be all I need, for Nina may not have any one there to help her when I reach home.' He spoke of you a number of times with great affection, and

one evening told Mamma and Lucy that you were the most unselfish woman he knew. I asked him Monday morning if he felt equal to making the trip, and he replied that he felt he had better get home. When he got down stairs and was waiting for the machine he took a big red apple out of his pocket and told Lucy 'Give this to Edith and tell her to fix it for Denny.' Sunday night Dr. and Mrs. Frank Day were here for supper and after supper Bishop Wilson had quite a little talk with them in his room.

"We have sent a telegram to Papa, he is in Florida. If the message reaches him promptly he may be able to reach Richmond or Baltimore tomorrow evening.

"I am so thankful that Bishop Wilson reached home. Bishop Kilgo and all of us here send you our love. We are praying for you, our hearts are full. Surely on high this day there must be great rejoicing, for he is with his Lord."

Mrs. White omitted to mention the fact that on Sunday Bishop Wilson asked her husband to sit with him, as he "felt a little nervous." He had never said such a thing before, and this was evidently a sign that he was conscious of unusual prostration and felt that the breaking down was at hand.

On Monday a number went to the railroad station to see him start home. He was so weak that they begged him to allow some one to travel with him. He would not consent, saying the porter could do all he required.

His train arrived in Baltimore at half-past four. Some time in the journey he grew worse. He was not met at the station, as he had not said what road he would take, or what time he was due. But when his cab drew up at his residence, and the chauffeur had to help him from the cab to the house, it was evident he was extremely ill. He sat down on a chair at the parlor door, to rest; but his loud breathing did not

abate. In a moment or two his daughter went out doors to get help to take him upstairs. He was unable to stand long enough to have coats and hat removed but fell into his chair at once.

His grand-daughter, a trained nurse, called for his physician, Doctor Henry F. Hill, and then began various preparations to make him comfortable. He had a hard chill lasting ten minutes perhaps, after which his mind wandered a little. This soon passed away, but speech was very difficult. He tried to tell his daughter everything he thought would interest her about the people he had met, Conference happenings, and as she was his Treasurer, to explain about the moneys in his purse.

He noted family affairs and asked if the study paper was new—confusing it with another room which had been papered. At half past eleven, he asked his niece, who was sitting by the bed, for a pipe—said his throat was so dry he needed it. She had long been deaf, and looking at her tenderly, he said to his daughter, “How I wish she could hear.” This was his last remark, except in answer to direct questions. Later his daughter said to him, “I think you must know how very ill you are.” Not very quickly, but calmly, he replied, “Yes.” A little later she inquired, “Is there anything you want?” He answered without opening his eyes, “Nothing you can do for me.”

At eight o'clock in the morning, surrounded by his three daughters, his granddaughter, and two nieces, in the room that had been his study for many, many years, he departed for the “Better Country.”

He was greatly attached to his nephews and nieces, and the nieces who were present, together with his daughters, counted it a special privilege that he was at home when the end came.

The news of his death produced a profound sensation throughout the Church. Messages of love and sympathy came from all sections to the stricken family, not only from our own people but from the friends and admirers of the fallen chieftain in other Churches. The feeling in our own Church was that of Elisha when upon witnessing the translation of Elijah he cried: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

His funeral services were held in Trinity Church, on Thursday afternoon, November 23, at two o'clock. It was the great regret of the family and intimate friends of the Bishop that some of those who were closest and dearest to him in personal and official relations, associates in the College of Bishops and others could not reach Baltimore in time to speak beside his bier, for it was felt that the tributes these who had been bound to him by such tender and intimate ties could have given to his life would have been just the interpretation the great Bishop would have desired. While grateful for the loving tributes of those who spoke, his family and his friends were naturally grieved on account of the unavoidable absence of others.

Notwithstanding the falling rain the church was crowded with a vast concourse of people, including Dr. Thos. N. Ivey, editor of the Nashville Christian Advocate, Dr. E. H. Rawlings, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Missions, and Dr. Charles D.

Bulla, Corresponding Secretary of the Sunday School Board, connectional men of Nashville; a delegation from the Virginia Conference; our preachers of Washington and a large company from Mt. Vernon Place Church of that city, and a host of ministers of the three Methodisms of Baltimore and elsewhere, the three Methodisms uniting in the services to honor the life and character of the Bishop with Bishop E. R. Hendrix, Senior Bishop of our Church in charge. Bishop Atkins had left a Conference to come to the service, arriving at the church at two o'clock, and returning by a train that went south at five.

Dr. F. T. Tagg, of the Methodist Protestant Church, made a tender prayer at the home before the funeral cortege went to the church. Rev. John Paul Tyler, a former pastor and intimate friend, occupied a seat with the family in the brief service at the home and the public service in the church.

Rev. W. H. Best, the pastor of Trinity, read the solemn words of the ritual beginning with "I know that my Redeemer liveth," as the funeral procession moved down the aisle of the historic church.

After an organ prelude, "Flee as a Bird," Mr. Everett Blake sang Bishop Wilson's favorite hymn, "The God of Abraham Praise." The first Scripture lesson was read by Rev. E. V. Regester, a former pastor, and the second by Dr. F. J. Prettyman, chaplain of the United States Senate. "Rock of Ages" was announced by Bishop James Atkins, and prayer was offered by Dr. T. H. Lewis, president of the Western Maryland College. Addresses were made by Bishop Hendrix, and Bishops Earl Cranston

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and Luther B. Wilson, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and by Rev. B. W. Bond, D. D., presiding elder of the Alexandria District, and Rev. John O. Willson, D. D., president of Lander College, Greenwood, S. C. Both Dr. Bond and Dr. Willson had been life-long friends of Bishop Wilson.

These addresses are reproduced in part. The tributes the speakers paid to Bishop Wilson's preaching are omitted in this connection as they appear in another chapter.

After "Asleep in Jesus" was sung, the benediction was pronounced by Bishop John W. Hamilton, of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The services at Loudon Park Cemetery were conducted by Rev. D. H. Kern, D. D., presiding elder of the Baltimore District, assisted by Rev. John A. Anderson, presiding elder of the Winchester District, by Rev. W. H. Best and Rev. C. D. Harris.

The active pallbearers were six of the city pastors—Revs. T. J. Lambert, C. M. Hesser, W. P. Johnston, J. W. Smith, G. G. Oliver and W. C. Boswell. The honorary pallbearers were Rev. Drs. B. W. Bond, J. A. Anderson, I. W. Canter, Charles W. Baldwin, J. St. Clair Neal, H. L. Hout, J. J. Ringer, E. K. Hardin, F. T. Tagg, H. M. Willson, Messrs. E. B. Magruder, R. G. Mowbray, L. W. Davis, F. E. Bond, J. E. Norwood, C. E. Muller and C. M. Armstrong.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADDRESSES.

BISHOP HENDRIX.

“A devout man was Stephen, and when he died his followers made great lamentation over him. It was because his life had been cut prematurely short. It had been concentrated into only one great sermon. It was like the century plant. It spent itself in one noble effort, in which the whole life is given. The church well felt that there was more back of that, more of preaching, more of service, and no doubt the lamentations were deep and widespread and sincere because the young life had been cut short. Our Lord never raised an old man from the dead, always young men and young women. When they had rounded out their life—three score and ten, or four score—He was not going to bring them back to life to take up their duties again. They rest in peace. But the little girl of twelve, the widow’s son, the young man whom the mother needed, and the noble brother of those two precious sisters of Bethany were called back to live, to take up their work, and to do more in their later life than ever before, for it was said of Lazarus that many came to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead, and to hear the testimony of his life and of his words all through his life whose eyes had twice looked on death.

“There was another man of whom it was said—having served his generation by the will of God he had fallen on sleep. David in the fulness of his years was laid to rest, and that sleep was unbroken, for he had rounded out his life as a man of God’s own heart. So, today, we do not make great lamentation over our sainted brother. He has served his generation, nay, two generations, by the will of God, and he has fallen on sleep after sixty-four years as a record of his wonderful ministry. Two generations are indebted to him for his marvelous preaching. He deserves to rest in peace. We would not call him back, if we could, for his weary years are ended, and he is in the bosom of God. We know where to find him. Bishop Wilson has fallen in a war in which there is no surcease, but whose out-

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come cannot be questioned, and his is the crown, and his is the throne, for he shared it with his Lord. The church is the only thing that endureth.

"In this hour of peculiar serenity and peace, we rejoice in Him in whom he believed and in whom we believe, the Captain of our salvation, the Lord of our conduct, our faith, our life.

"Alpheus Waters Wilson was a child of Baltimore, born in this city eighty-two years ago. He gave much of his great life to this city. This church where we meet today is the fruit of his labor. Many other churches in this city and in this Conference shared his activities, and it is in a peculiar sense the privilege of Baltimore to receive today his hallowed dust.

"Alpheus Waters Wilson was a four-fold man. It was said of Michael Angelo that he was four men in one—a great architect, a great sculptor, a great painter and a great poet. It is said that great men are not so different from ordinary men, except that there is so much more of them. John Wesley was one of those known as a four-fold man, in so much that you can make a life of him as a traveler, you can make a life of him as a preacher, you can make a life of him as an organizer alone, and you could make a life of him as a wonderful writer of books alone—author, preacher, organizer, traveler—what a four-fold life was there.

"Alpheus Waters Wilson led such a life as that—first of all, a humble, devoted, convinced believer in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—he might well say: 'For me to live is Christ.' The genuineness of his faith, the devoutness of his spirit, his well-grounded trust in God, everywhere showed him a true believer whose life ran out into marvelous activities, whose faith abounded unto life everlasting. We knew him as such. We had communion with him in the private places of worship, in the sweet fellowship of council. We honored him as a brother beloved of the Lord.

"He was widely known as a preacher. Especially was he known for his sermon on the 'Church in the Mind of



KATE LEAR
Cook in Bishop Wilson's household for forty years

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God,' a wonderful line of thought. It was published after a careful stenographic report.

"Alpheus Waters Wilson for thirty-four years made a great bishop, fitted for this work by long experience, by his great power of intellect, the great riches of his heart and his will, he led the hosts of Israel. And for the last sixteen years, as our Senior Bishop, he was honored and loved and revered by the whole church. With the knowledge of men, with the courage to do his duty, with a singleness of purpose, with a conception of the needs of the church, he wrought faithfully and well, and like Moses he could well pray: 'Establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.'

"We lay him to rest today, one of the great citizens of this commonwealth, of which he was a native, and of this country of which he was an honored citizen.

"Bishop Wilson is widely known as a man of God, as a great preacher, as a wonderful organizer—a commanding Bishop of the church, he sleeps today honored of his brethren, loved of all men.

"We recognize the mellowing influence of time on his character. He grew more and more tender as he grew older. His colleague for thirty years, I have known him well, and I have many dear memories of his love. Just three weeks ago in parting from me, he said, affectionately: 'I pray for you every day. I will probably never see you again. The sands are running out. My time is well nigh come.'

"And so today we lay him to rest, amid our tears. Thank God for Alpheus Wilson. Thank God for his honored father, thank God for his noble wife who helped so much to make him what he was to God and to the church."

BISHOP EARL CRANSTON.

"Sisters and brothers, it has fittingly fallen to Brother Hendrix to characterize in the way he has the work and service of Bishop Wilson.

"I don't want to appear exactly as a representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church. I know that I must

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speak for my colleagues here, and I know that I must tell of the high esteem in which Bishop Wilson was held by all the ministry of our church and by the people of our church who knew his work. I don't believe there will be any feeling other than that one of our own has gone, and I am telling no secret when I say to you that myself and my colleagues in the episcopal office have made it almost a promise between us that we shall pray every day for each other and also for the members of your College of Bishops, and it seems to us as if one of our own number has gone.

"To you, my brethren of the church that he loved, I bring the sympathy of our ministry. I know what you thought of him, at least, I think I do.

"Never did I see the touch of man upon man, the embrace of man upon man, when it moved me more than when I saw Bishop Wilson was leaving us at Chattanooga. He had given us a most wonderful address, teaching his loyalty to all that he believed and to his people, full of faith in God. When he started to leave, his worthy colleagues in the Episcopate gathered about him, threw their arms about his shoulders and embraced him.

BISHOP LUTHER B. WILSON.

"It seems strange to stand here and Bishop Wilson to be lying there. As Bishop Hendrix has said, I have known Bishop Wilson as long as I have known anyone, almost, and I have revered him as long as I have known him, and my love for him has deepened with the years. To me he stands out quite apart from the brotherhood devoted to Jesus Christ and to the spread of His gospel among men. It has all been said here this afternoon. But I sat and listened to him again and again, listened to him in those golden days when the sunlight came through the trees, and in silence the multitudes hung upon his words.

"I pay the tribute of my love to him this afternoon. As a great churchman he belonged to a goodly fellowship, but as I have thought of him and as I have thought of those who went before him, it seems to me that he comes nearer to that fine type of ecclesiastical statesmanship than is represented to us by any other than Joshua Soule—a

man of the same order of mind, and with the same keenness of analysis, and with the same calmness of synthesis also as this man of God, this prince of our common Israel today. As I think of Joshua Soule today so I think of Bishop Wilson.

"I cannot test your patience, but as I sat here, I thought of what after all must have been the essential thing in the fashioning of such a preacher, in the making of such a master of assemblies, in the arm of one so keen in his power to construct, and so well able for that constructive policy to which he gave himself, and it seems to me that the logic of the mind was like the logic of his heart, like the logic of his life. You who knew him, you who knew him through the days, like the common days and then the golden days and the epochal days, you who knew him know this of him, that he was a follower of the Lord, just as certainly as Israel in the olden day followed the pillar of fire, so he followed the pillar of fire and of cloud, just as evidently as in that old day when our diademed Lord touched that great apostle to the Gentiles, and in a moment fired the mind and heart of that apostle with warring devotion to Himself, so that same Master spoke to him, and so to that same Master, his heart and mind and life were pledged in an avowal as unmistakable and as loyally maintained. I think of that apostle whom he loved, and with whom he had such characteristic fellowship. I have been thinking of the words that we heard read here this afternoon: 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.'

"Therefore, the life of this great servant of the Lord, the genuineness of this great servant of God is a logical sequence to the things that he believed and knew. Living as I have been privileged to live, where I saw him now and again, and still more frequently heard of him, knowing of those days of physical weakness that sometimes came to him, and that multiplied in the latter years, I have come to feel almost as though Death would find it difficult to overtake this great man, Death would find it difficult to

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master this servant of the King. And it seemed to me that when he went away he had defied death, he had outrun death. Death came so near to him that reaching after him death grasped his mantle, but the runner has entered through the gates into the city, and he shall not see death. And as I think of Bishop Wilson absent from the body and present with the Lord, it seems to me that the memory of his life with its vision and with its victories shall come to steady our steps as we go on our way. If the memory of the just is blessed, how blessed the memory of this life. And if sorrow possess us when we part, how glad shall be the day when in the presence of the King and of that glorious company that I think must already have gathered at the gates to greet him, we shall see his King, and the great multitude, and shall see again the face of this man of God, faithful unto death, and devoted with the last energy of his life. May it be so, and may his mantle fall upon us."

DR. B. W. BOND.

"I do not need to say anything in regard to the greatness of Bishop Wilson in his official work. I will simply say something as to his private character. I have known him nearly all my life, and closely so many years. I have always found him the same true, sincere, simple-hearted man. I have known him in his official capacity, never swerving from the straight line, never failing in his desire and effort to be true, and doing everything in every way that he could to promote the welfare of those about him, those that came to him. I would speak of his unfailing courtesy, kindness of spirit, and sympathy for all with whom he came in contact. In private life he was one among thousands, one altogether filled with God's spirit, desiring to benefit all with whom he came in contact. This was not only to all those who were in fellowship with him in church relationship, but as it happened to me before I was a preacher, or even a member of the church. In the troublous days of 1864 he did me a kindness at risk to himself, without any obligation on his part whatsoever. It is not meet that I should go into details at this time, but

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there was danger to him and his family, and yet without any hesitation whatever, and without making any to do about it, he simply did this kindly act for me. In after years I had the privilege of sharing his ministry regularly at the old Emmanuel Church of this city, where he labored for a time after he had retired from the active work of the ministry, but he filled that place, and it was the memory of that occasion in 1864 that never left me, that drew me to him and his ministry, and though I did not join the church or profess religion for some time, yet it was his ministry which I felt brought me at last to the foot of the cross, and the fellowship in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was full of sympathy and kindness in all the relations of life, in his private character and in his official capacity. He was my friend. He honored me with his friendship and love, and I feel that I have lost a father indeed, this day, and I pray that by God's grace I will see him again and I will meet him in the better land."

DR. J. O. WILLSON.

"It would be selfish for me to speak for myself, rather I would speak for South Carolina—the state of William Wightman, of Coke Smith, of John Kilgo, the state from which came the first missionary abroad of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the state where Stephen Olin was born.

"From the year 1878, when Bishop Wilson came to South Carolina, to the last day he spent there, that man held our hearts and minds, and led us wheresoever he pleased. I am not speaking alone for the Methodists of South Carolina, though they loved him with a surpassing love, but I am speaking of those of other communions and other churches who heard him, and who gave him their hearts, and more and more were taught by him to love God.

"There is no question about the greatness of Bishop Wilson. He was the greatest preacher that I ever heard or ever expect to hear, and I have heard many great preachers, and 'never a man spake like this man.' I trust the quotation is not sacrilegious. But he spake for his

Lord, and spake like his Lord's servant, that wonderful apostle to the Gentiles.

"I will not take your time to talk about him, for living here as you have lived, you must know him, perhaps a little better than I did, though I am not sure of that. One thing I charge you to remember, you Baltimoreans, and all the rest of you, love him as you may, you cannot love him more than South Carolina, honor him as you must, you cannot honor him more than the people of the Palmetto State, for in the length and breadth of our little commonwealth the name of Alpheus Waters Wilson is a name that is set above and apart from all other names.

"I had the privilege of having the great Bishop visit me for nearly a week just a few weeks ago. This is the reason why I take up your time at all. I heard the last sermon that Bishop Wilson spoke, before he went home, and in shaking hands with him, I looked into the face of Him whom he and Paul loved with a wonderful love. He came to my home on the 8th day of November, and he was not as strong as I would have liked to find him, and it was a pleasure to minister to him, and a pleasure when he left me the following Monday to see he was stronger than when he came. Indeed, it was a great shock to hear of his death, for he was stronger than when with me a year ago.

"On Sunday, the 12th of November, we went down together to the church in Greenwood, South Carolina. He did not tell me what he was going to preach about. I had not asked him. He took his text from the first chapter of the book of Colossians: 'Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.' I wish you could have seen his expression as he said that 'To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.'

"Right now, this very moment that we are thinking of him, he is with the Lord, and looking into the face of Jesus, and he is telling Jesus all the things that are in his head and

his heart, and he is worshiping and loving Him as few can worship and few can love.

“Farewell, my dear old friend whom I love, and whom all of us love. Farewell until we meet again in the city of God.”

Many high tributes have been paid the life and character of Bishop Wilson by those who knew him well and many papers extolling his marvelous career have been adopted by ecclesiastical bodies, but I question whether any of them do him full justice. We of the present have lived too close to this towering personality to get the proper perspective for measuring his real greatness. Unlike most men, he will loom larger with the passing years. He is destined to be recognized as a great historical character that has been a tremendous factor in shaping the history of Methodism on this continent and in the regions beyond. In a half century or more men will be better able to place a true value on the mighty influence and power of this man, who lived, moved, and had his being in the midst of us.

